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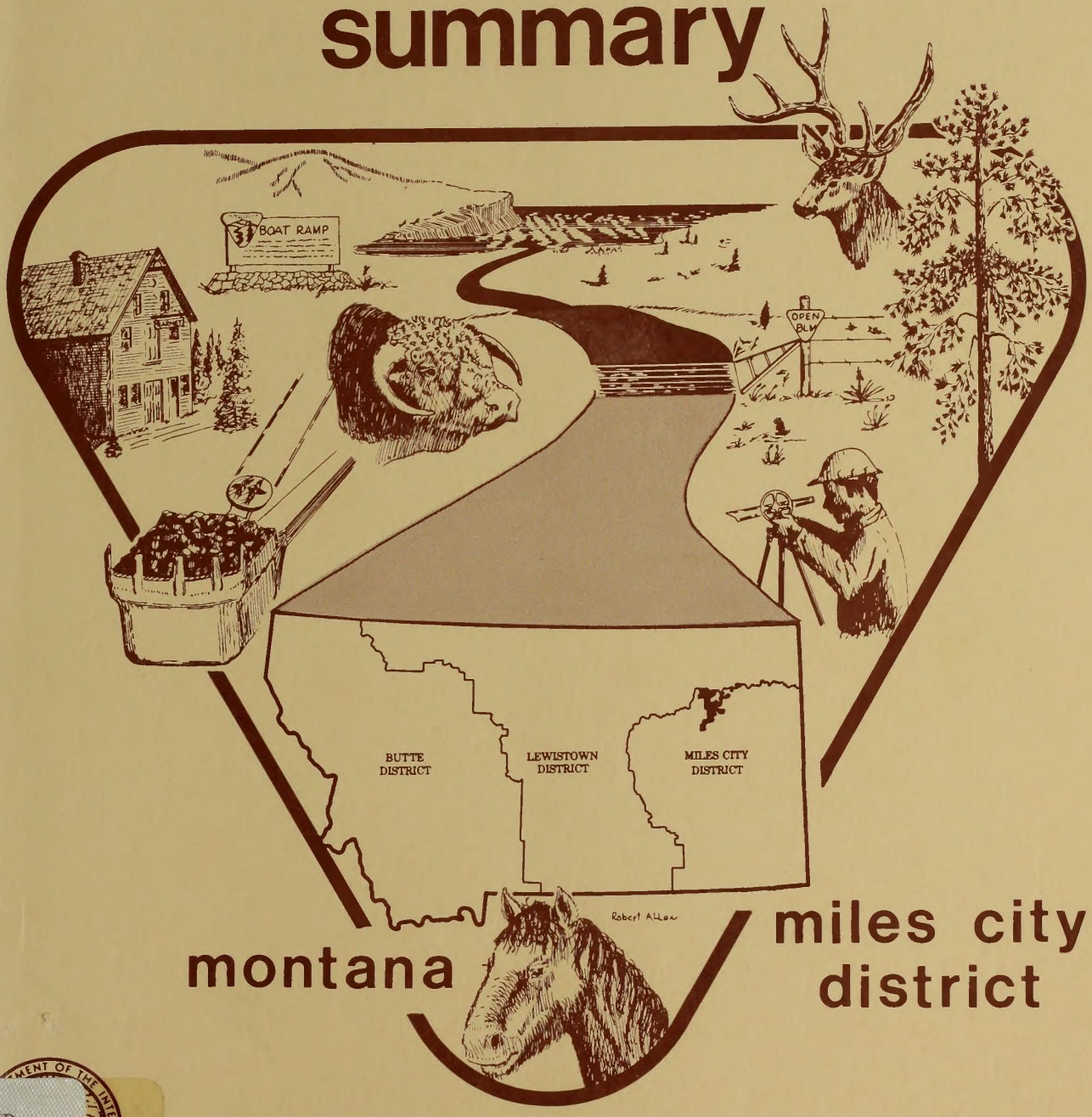
# mccone

# MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK PLAN

## summary

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

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## Preface

The Bureau of Land Management's Montana State organization manages resources on almost 8.4 million acres of surface land and 55 million acres of subsurface minerals in Montana, North Dakota and South Dakota. The Miles City District Office is responsible for more than 3 million surface and 11.7 million subsurface acres. These public lands are used by many people for a variety of activities. It is BLM's responsibility to develop coordinated land use allocations specifying the guidelines, constraints, and criteria for the utilization or protection of the public's resources.

To better prepare for present and future demands on public lands, BLM has developed land use plans for many areas of the state. This publication contains a summary of the land use decisions for approximately 165,000 acres of public lands in the McCone Planning Unit.

These decisions, the approved multiple use recommendations of BLM resource specialists and managers, were made after gathering all available resource data, and requesting the viewpoints of local citizens and the user public. Each rancher with an allotment on public lands within the planning unit was contacted during the allotment management plan inventory. Most of the tracts of public land were subject to on-the-ground review.

Several agencies, including Montana Fish and Game, Soil Conservation Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, and McCone County have furnished data and assistance in this project. Additional valuable input has been obtained by incidental contacts with various interested resource users during the course of development of the planning system over the last several years. Public meetings in Jordan and Circle in 1973 and 1978 were held for the purpose of receiving public comments on the multiple use recommendations. By design, the decisions are flexible so they can deal with new demands or new conditions that may arise. They will be updated or revised as necessary to help keep this management framework plan current and effective. Any major changes in this plan will be subject to public review and comment.

In the interest of clarity and brevity, this report is a summary document of the total planning process. The planning effort for the McCone Planning Unit began in 1969; this publication summarizes the decisions as they have been finalized in 1977. Detailed maps, physical resource data, and social and economic data are not included in this report. These materials, as well as the other components of BLM's land use planning process, are available for public review during regular business hours at the Miles City District Office. If you wish to review these documents, please make an appointment so that we can have someone available to discuss them with you.

My staff and I thank everyone who assisted in this effort, especially those who attended our public meetings or contributed to the final product. We look forward to working with you again in formulating similar plans or updating older plans as the need arises.

George S. Neuberg
District Manager

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## Introduction

### BLM Planning System

Under the Bureau's planning system, detailed information is gathered and management decisions are developed in eight categories. These categories are lands, minerals, timber, range, watershed, wildlife habitat, recreation, and cultural resources. In order to meet the needs of its diverse public land users, BLM must effectively balance the management of these resources. Under the concept of multiple use management, all potential uses of the public's resources are evaluated before a final management plan is developed and implemented.

The Bureau of Land Management has developed its land use planning system with three major components:

Program Direction
Resource Information
Management Decisions

1. Program Direction. General program direction, policies, goals, and priorities are set by the President, Congress, and the Secretary of the Interior. These directions are expressed in executive orders, laws, regulations, and other documents.

2. Resource Information. In initiating this phase of the planning system, BLM specialists gather all of the available land and resource information relative to the region under study. Each resource specialist--the forester, range conservationist, minerals specialist, watershed specialist, etc.--studies the planning area to determine current condition, use, trends, and problems concerning his resource responsibility. This analysis is then further developed to identify maximum potential for the resource use without consideration of competing or conflicting uses. The importance of this step is that each potential is considered individually. In addition, socio-economic data is gathered and analyzed to facilitate the evaluation of land use alternatives generated by the planning system. In compiling the above information, the Bureau contacts all known interests to be certain that all available data has been obtained.

3. Management Decisions. The next phase of the planning system is designed to resolve resource use conflicts and to provide basic guidelines for the use and management of the public lands under study. This is the

heart of the planning system. At this stage, each resource specialist prepares objectives and outlines specific proposals for the optimum use of his resource based on current technology, Bureau guidelines, and the socio-economic needs of the region. Each individual resource proposal is then fully documented and individually presented utilizing a map and overlay system. At this point, conflicts between various resource proposals and possible multiple use solutions are identified through careful analysis and utilization of narratives, maps, and overlays. Based on comments and information received through public participation, BLM managers are often able to develop modified as well as additional land use alternatives and multiple use solutions. The impacts of each of these alternatives are identified and analyzed to facilitate the selection of the best mix of uses. A comprehensive land use plan is then developed and adopted. Coordinated land use allocations, guidelines, constraints, and criteria for utilization are intrinsic to this plan.

## Planning Assumptions

1. Management guidelines set forth in this document apply to public lands and, where appropriate, to those lands where the Federal Government owns the mineral estate. In the McCone Planning Unit, the BLM administers approximately 165,000 acres of surface and 188,000 acres of subsurface (mineral estate).

2. All of the guidelines developed in this study are subject to revision as the management climate changes. As data improves, technology changes, legislation is developed, or social demands change, these guidelines will be revised to reflect those changes. Major revisions in program direction will be subject to public review.

3. The implementation of the management guidelines set forth in this document is governed by the availability of manpower and funds.

## General Description of the Area

The McCone Planning Unit is located in the western and northwestern portions of McCone County, Montana, encompassing 426,000 acres. The Charles M. Russell National Wildlife Range, on which public lands are administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, lies on the western boundary, along the Fort Peck Reservoir.

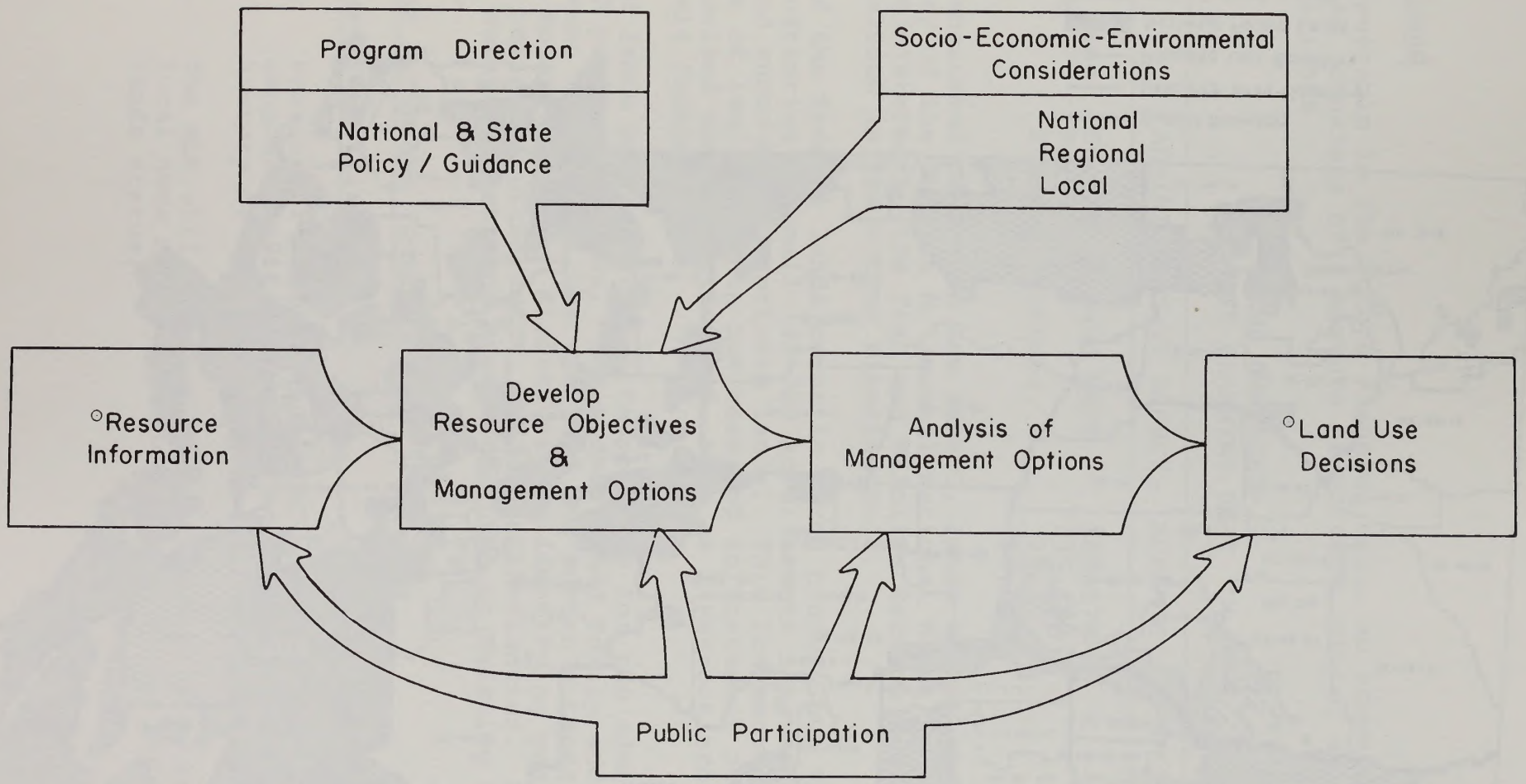
The town of Fort Peck is approximately eight miles west of the northwest corner of the unit, and Circle, the McCone County seat, is 20 miles from the southeast boundary. Within the planning area, most residents are members of farming and ranching families.

Topography of the area varies from rolling grassland to river breaks and badlands, with an elevation variance between 2,170 and 2,920 feet. The dominant physical features of the area include the Missouri River along the northern boundary, and the rugged terrain of the breaks and badlands along the major drainages.

## Major Issues and Problems

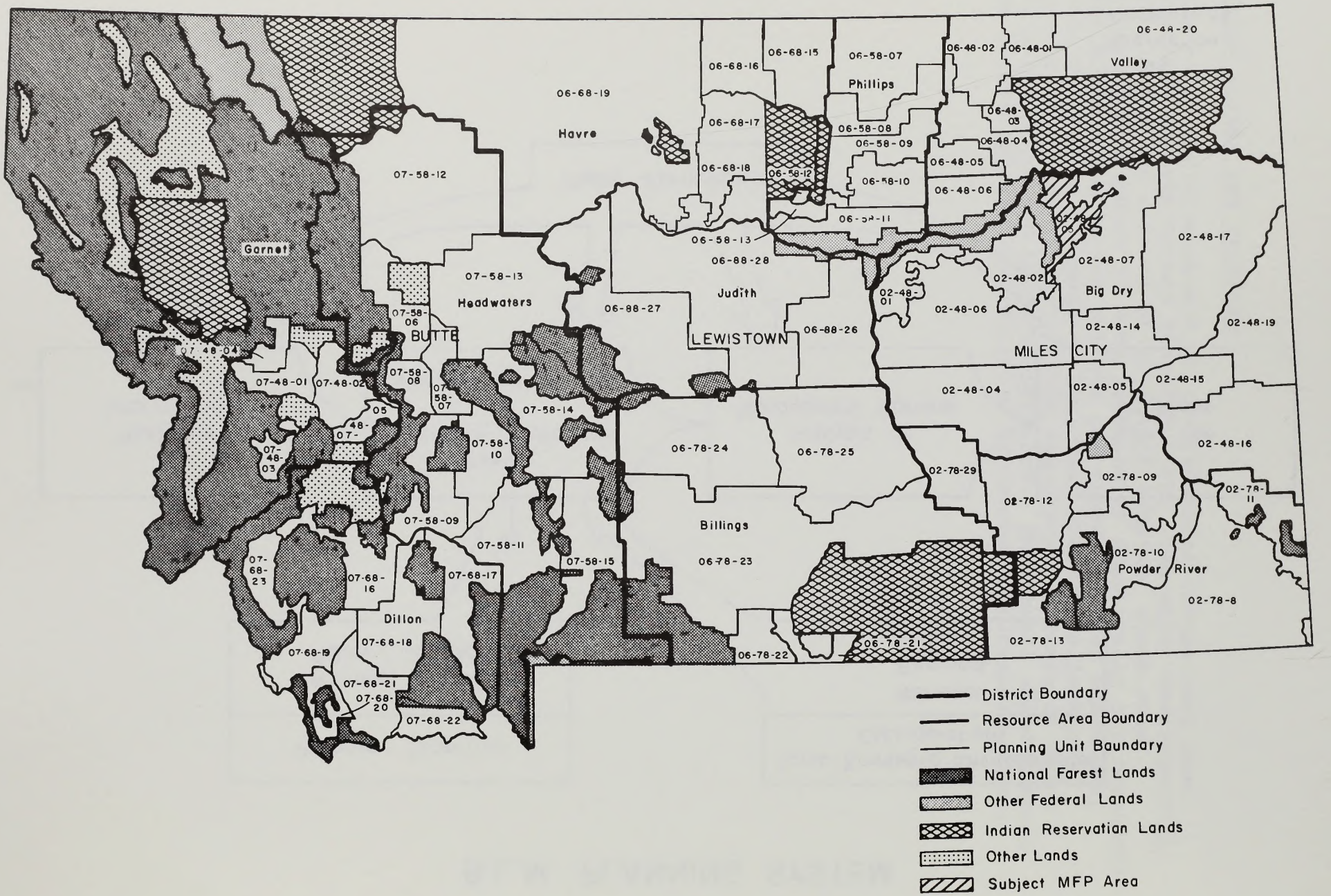
Few major social-economic or environmental issues have been surfaced for the McCone Planning Unit. The major environmental problem is the control of livestock grazing, since over-grazing contributes to deterioration of practically all resources. Social-economic issues include the expenditure of additional public funds on projects to implement proposed allotment management plans (AMPs) and the associated increase in costs of maintenance and range supervision. Additional impacts would be associated with the creation of proposed wilderness areas.

# B.L.M. PLANNING SYSTEM




°Lands
°Minerals
°Range
°Recreation
°Watersheds
°Timber
°Wildlife

# MONTANA PLANNING UNITS



LANDS

## Background

Land ownership in the McCone Planning Unit, as shown on the base map, consists of a mixture of private, state, and federal lands.

LAND OWNERSHIP
MCCONE PLANNING UNIT

| | ADMINISTRATIVE AGENCY | ACREAGE | % OF TOTAL ACRE. |
|---|---|---|---|
| Public land | Bureau of Land Mgmt. | 165,078 | 39 |
| Private | Private | 235,139 | 55 |
| State | State of Montana | 26,691 | 6 |
| TOTALS | | 426,908 | 100% |

Since enactment of Public Law 94-223, lands within the boundary of the Charles M. Russell National Wildlife Range are administered by the Fish and Wildlife Service and are not included in the McCone Planning Unit.

Most of the federal lands occur in large blocks, but there is a scattering of small (40-200 acre) tracts intermingled with and surrounded by private lands. This fragmented pattern of land ownership has resulted in instances of unauthorized use of public land, such as livestock trespass and grain farming.

The BLM lands specialists are responsible for the administration of public land laws. The Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) has provided the Bureau's Lands and Realty Specialists with directives for identifying public lands, review of withdrawals, and use authorization. Most of the resource decisions stem from FLPMA or existing Bureau policy.

## Resource Decisions (& Rationale)

1. Land Identification

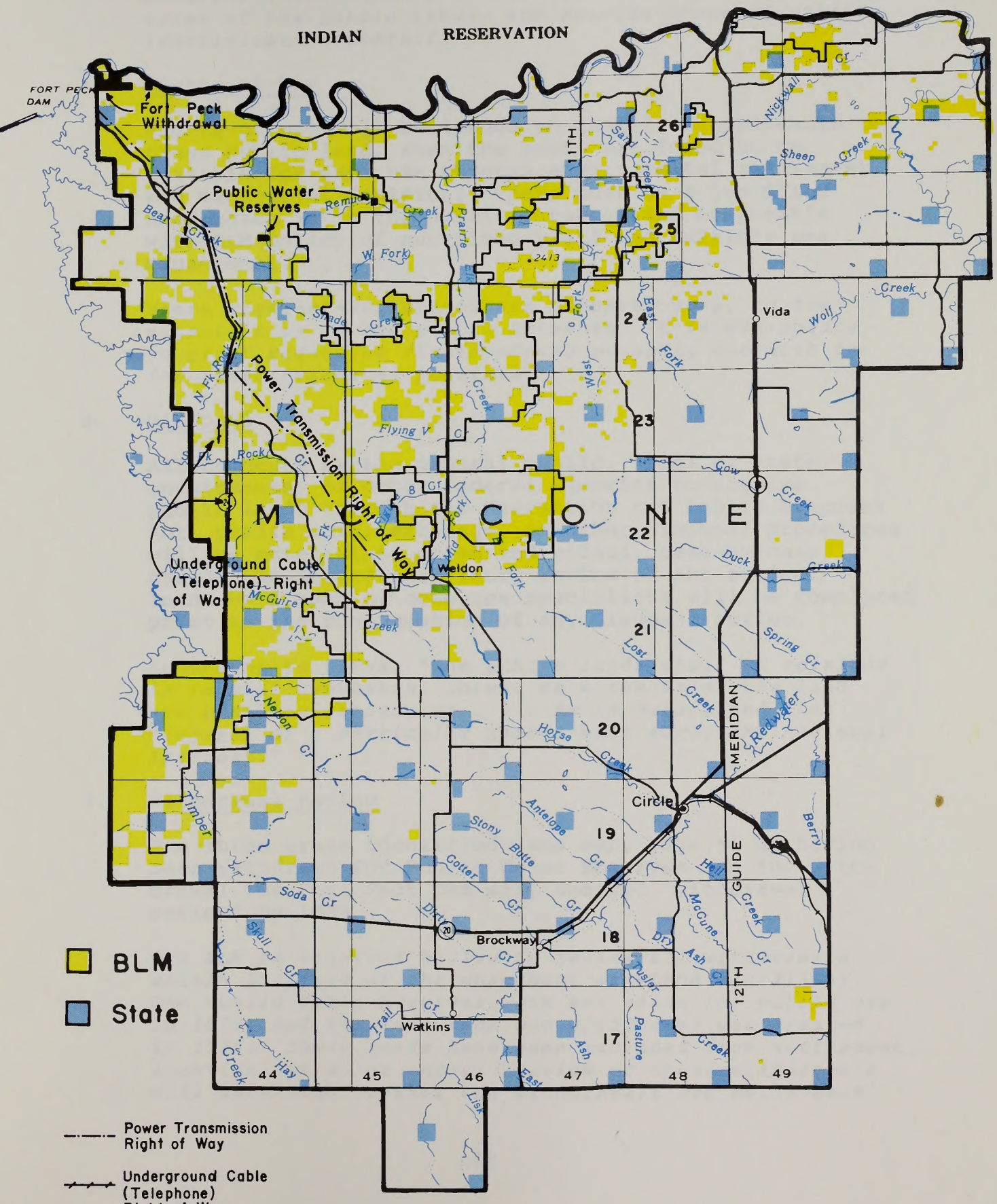
   a. Posting of public lands will begin as soon as manpower and funds become available. Areas with a history of unauthorized use will have priority.

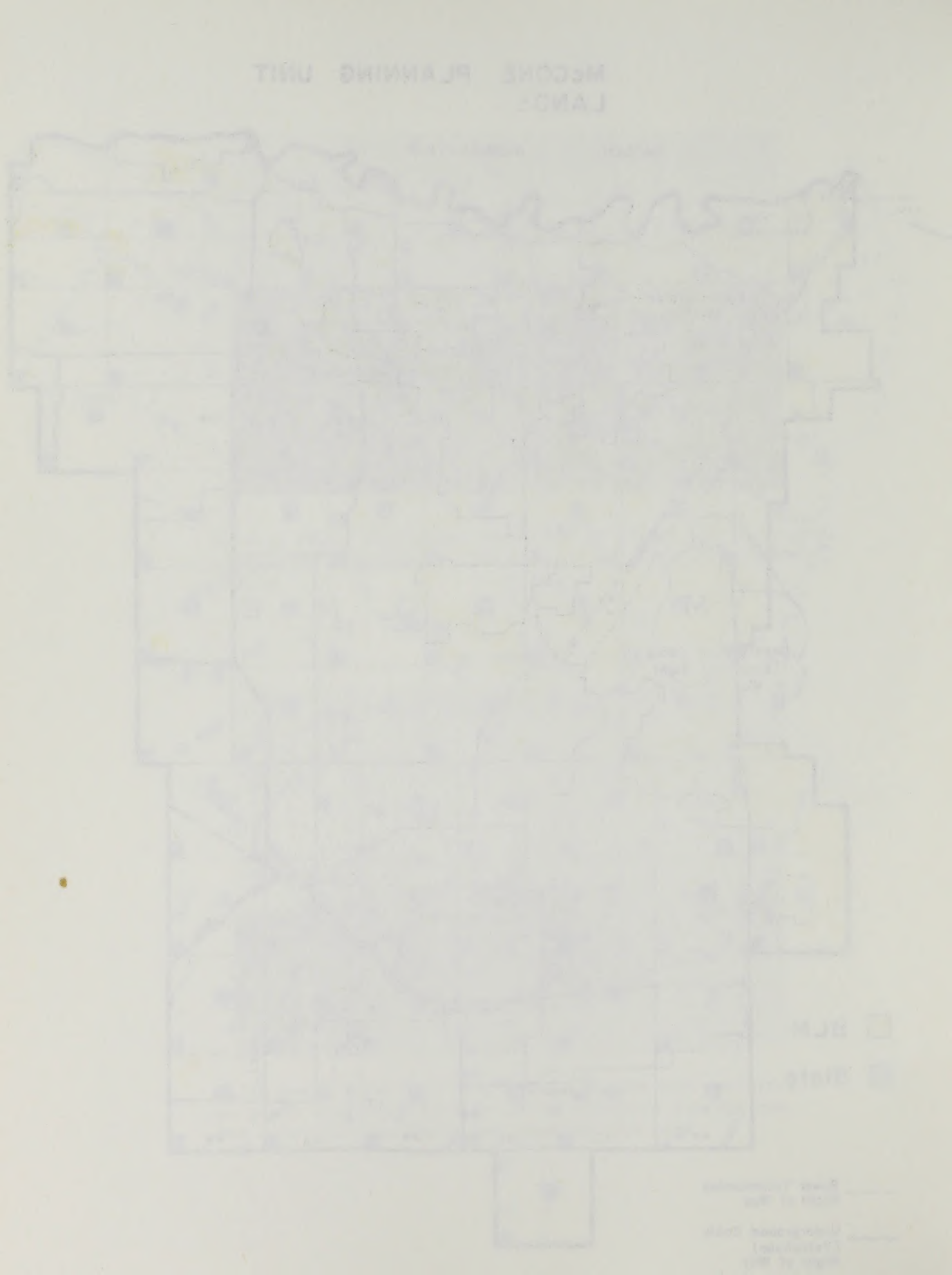
   b. The BLM will continue to provide maps and use local news media to inform people of the public lands status.

*In July 1927, this photo was taken to illustrate the typical topography developed in the area of McGuire Creek, McCone County.*

*Fifty years later, in June 1977, the spot was revisited. No grain field can be seen on the opposite terrace now, but otherwise the scene has remained the same.*

# McCONE PLANNING UNIT LANDS





*Section 201(b) of FLPMA requires the Secretary of the Interior (and, therefore, BLM) to ascertain the boundaries of the public lands, and provide means of public identification thereof.*

2. Rights-of-Way

Rights-of-way will be issued to qualified applicants to cross public land, when the lands are found to be suitable for such use through environmental assessment and managerial decision. There must be a justified need which is in the public interest and compatible with BLM policy of sustained yield and multiple use management.

*Where right-of-way grants are discretionary, to the extent it is in the public interest, it is BLM policy to grant requested rights-of-way promptly and with as few restrictions as possible.*

3. Disposal

All requests by the general public, local or state governments, or other federal agencies to acquire public lands through the Recreation and Public Purposes Act, public sale, exchange, or other disposal procedures will be entertained on an individual, case-by-case basis. An interdisciplinary review of the subject lands by a team of resource specialists will be completed prior to the consummation of any disposal action.

*According to FLPMA, "the public lands shall be retained in federal ownership, unless as a result of the land use planning procedures . . . it is determined that disposal of a particular parcel will serve the national interest."*

4. Withdrawal Review

The three areas identified (see map, page 9) as having been withdrawn for Public Water Reserves and the withdrawal for Fort Peck Dam will undergo "withdrawal review" by 1983.

*The BLM is required by law to review all withdrawals within 15 years of the enactment of FLPMA (10/21/76). The Public Water Reserves were set aside for public use in 1919, and the Fort Peck Dam withdrawal was created in 1936. These lands have been excluded from settlement, location, sale, or entry. Review of these withdrawals will determine whether the withdrawals are being used*

*as originally intended. The result of such review is a recommendation for rejection, extension, or modification of the original withdrawal order.*

5. Trespass

a. By September 1, 1978, each of the suspected agricultural trespasses will be resolved.

b. All other actions of a trespass nature will be resolved on a case-by-case basis, upon discovery, and as manpower and funds become available.

*It is Bureau policy to eliminate unauthorized use in an expeditious manner protecting the lands, resources, environment, and public values from unavoidable destruction, abuse, and deterioration.*

6. Management of Use, Occupancy, and Development

On an individual, case-by-case basis, public lands may be occupied for habitation, cultivated, harvested for native hay, or developed for small trade or manufacturing concerns.

*Section 302(b) of FLPMA allows, subject to the law and regulations, the use, occupancy, and development of public lands. Certain public lands are suitable for cultivation, haying, and development of small trade or manufacturing concerns. These uses may be carried on where there is a justified need.*

MINERALS

Background

In general, the outlook for mineral development in the McCone Planning Unit is very dim because of the limited resources. Since all of the bedrock in this planning unit is sedimentary in nature, the chances of finding locatable minerals such as silver, gold, lead, zinc, etc., are very slim.

The McCone Planning Unit lies in the Fort Union Coal Region. The coal (lignite) is present in several of the geologic formations, but not all is of economic value. Because of the thin beds (about half of which are less than 30" thick) and poor quality of the coal in this planning unit, there is little potential for coal development in the foreseeable future.

The northern half of the Weldon Oil Field falls within the McCone Planning Unit boundaries. This is a small field with only a few productive wells. In another small field (Prairie Elk Field), of the five wells drilled four were dry. The whole area, which is within the Williston Basin, seems to be conducive to oil and gas entrapment.

The bentonite in the planning unit occurs as thin beds at the base of the Bearpaw Formation. The Bearpaw Shale is about 1,000 feet thick and only the top of it is exposed. No development of these thin bentonite beds is expected in the foreseeable future.

Gypsum and anhydrite occur within the planning unit but are very deeply buried and therefore of no economic value at the present time. Future exploration for uranium may be possible since such work has been conducted to the east and west of the planning unit.

Sand and gravel exist where alluvium and terrace gravels have accumulated, in the flood plain of the Missouri River, and along its tributaries. However, most of the alluvium in this area is made up of silts and clays rather than sand and gravel, and very little terrace gravel exists in the unit. More than half of the unit is overlain by ground moraine (glacial deposits of clay, sand, pebbles, and boulders), but such deposits are not usually suited to sand and gravel development because of the wide variation in size of the rock material.

Only the western portion of the planning unit has been explored for fossil sites, mainly by the Berkeley Museum of

Paleontology. The outlook for finding more significant fossils in the planning unit is promising, since vast acreages remain to be explored.

Minerals development may conflict with other resource programs. The lands excepted from development, in most cases, do not have identified minerals resources. The minerals map, page 14, shows the coal, oil, and gas resources known to exist in the planning unit.

Resource Decisions (& Rationale)

1. Coal (see map, page 14)

   a. Provide for the issuance of coal exploration licenses under existing policy guidelines and regulations.

      Excepted lands: Those identified sharptail/sage grouse leks (dancing/strutting grounds) and nesting areas from February 1 to July 1, prairie dog towns, endangered species habitat areas, within 100 feet of flood plains, and in VRM (Visual Resource Management) Class I and II scenic areas. On a case-by-case basis, with special stipulations, exploration will be restricted on frail lands, in high erosion areas, and in proposed campground sites.

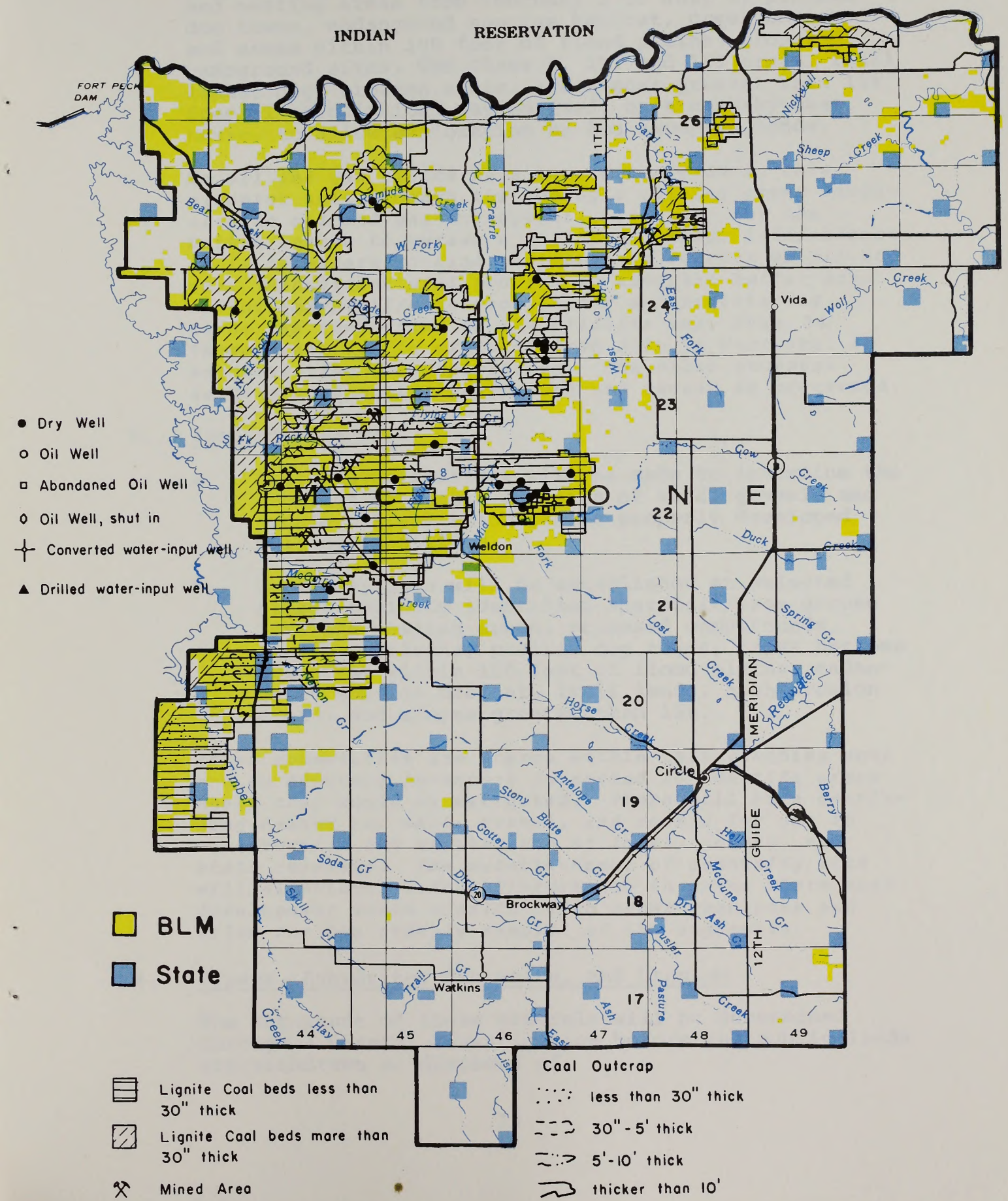
   b. If requested, coal licenses will be issued to mine coal following the guidelines set in 43 CFR 3530 (license to mine coal), in identified areas, with exception of those areas listed above.

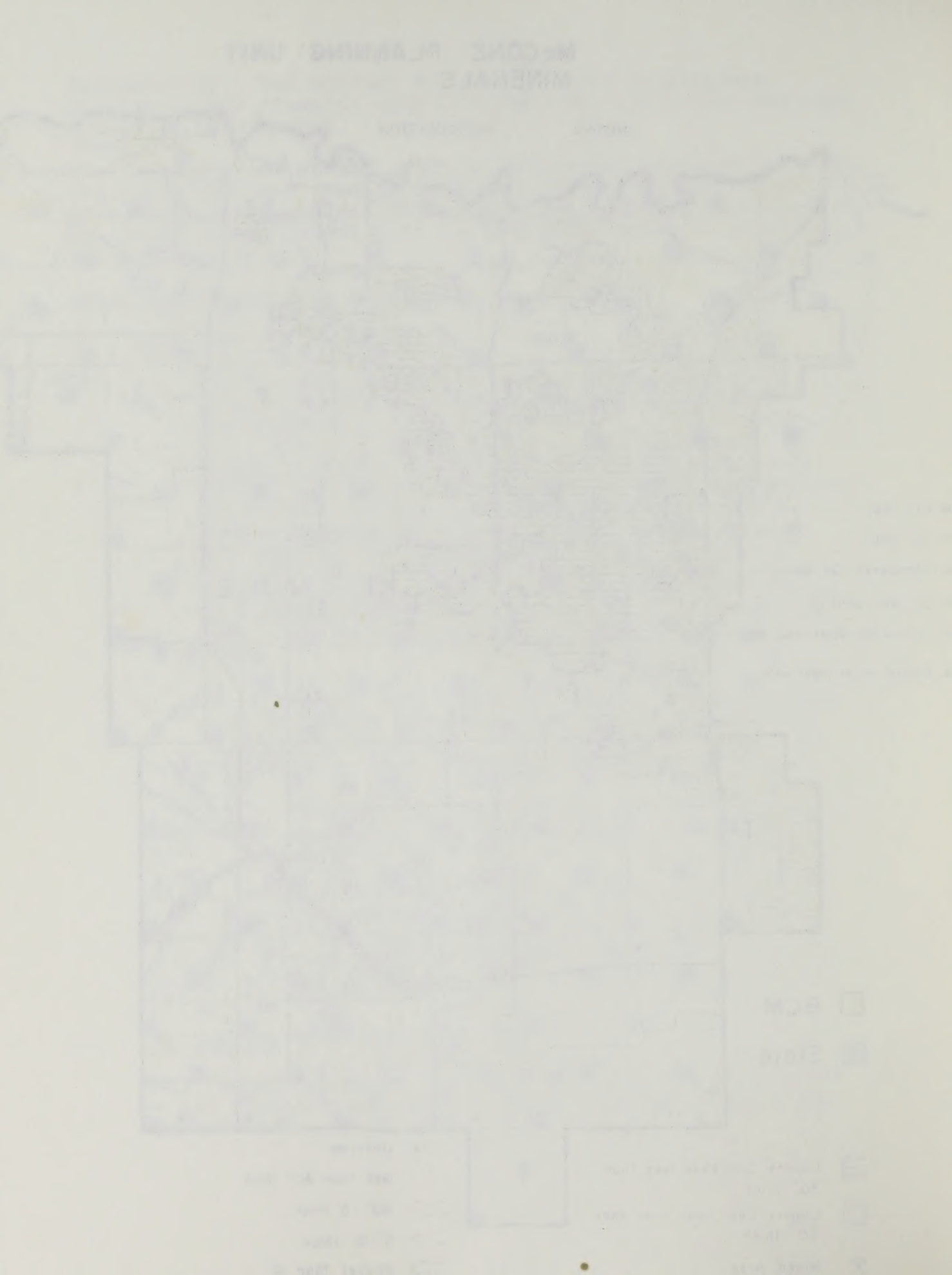
*Increasing demand for energy sources requires that reserves be located and extracted where feasible. The Federal Coal Leasing Amendment Act (1976), along with other legislation and BLM policy, provides directives for the mineral program. To reduce conflicts with other resource programs, the "excepted lands" in the approved multiple use recommendation are excluded from coal exploration and development as stated. Sufficient coal is available outside the excepted areas to satisfy anticipated demand.*

2. Oil and Gas (see map, page 14)

   With the exception of the lands listed below, all lands in the planning unit will be available for oil and gas exploration.

# McCONE PLANNING UNIT
# MINERALS





Excepted lands: Identified sharptail/sage grouse leks and nesting areas from February 1 to July 1, prairie dog towns, endangered species habitat, creek bottoms and areas within 100 feet of flood plains, proposed campground sites, VRM Class I, II, and III areas, frail lands, high erosion areas, and slopes greater than 15%. Special stipulations may be used, on a case-by-case basis, to allow exploration on the excepted lands.

*No oil and gas fields have been discovered in this planning unit, though the geologic setting seems conducive to oil and gas entrapment. In order for the United States to pursue a policy of energy independence, it is necessary to find new domestic sources of oil and gas. Management will provide an adequate buffer zone around sharptail/sage grouse leks and prairie dog towns, as identified on the wildlife map, page 34. These areas can be explored from July to February, an adequate time for exploration. The other excepted lands are sensitive year-round and should be protected.*

3. Sand and Gravel

a. Field investigations will be made to determine the location of usable deposits of sand, gravel, and scoria. Areas which can be properly developed will be identified.

b. Community pits will be established at selected sites, avoiding identified sharptail/sage grouse leks and nesting areas, proposed campgrounds, scenic overlooks, prairie dog towns, creek bottoms and areas within 100 feet of flood plains, endangered species habitat, frail lands, high erosion areas, and slopes greater than 15%.

*These commodities are scarce within this planning unit and an adequate inventory is needed to identify areas where they could be extracted. There will be a continuing demand for sand, gravel, and scoria for use in construction and maintenance of local, county, and state roadways. The establishment of community pits will alleviate surface disturbance in areas where such development would conflict with other resources and allow for the orderly removal of the aggregate.*

4. Gypsum, Anhydrite, Bentonite, and Uranium

The magnitude of these minerals will be determined through a mineral investigation before any public lands are withdrawn or disposed of.

*Little is known about the availability of these minerals. However, mineral authorities predict that requirements and demand for mineral commodities will exceed all of the minerals consumed by mankind to date, necessitating the use of much lower grade deposits. Prior to disposal or withdrawal of public lands, the lands should be inventoried for these minerals.*

5. Paleontology

a. Paleontological surveys will be conducted to identify areas of fossil concentrations.

*About 80-85% of the planning unit is underlain by the Hell Creek Formation and the Tullock Member of the Fort Union Formation, which contain abundant dinosaur and early mammal fossils.*

b. Antiquities permits will be issued to interested universities, museums, and other scientific groups for all public lands in the planning unit, except those lands also excluded from sand and gravel development. On a case-by-case basis, special stipulations may allow exploration on these areas.

*According to the Antiquities Act (1906), only qualified groups are allowed to excavate paleontological sites. The issuance of antiquities permits is the Bureau's vehicle for allowing such development. Special stipulations and restrictions will alleviate any potential conflicts with other resource programs.*

c. Paleontological surveys will be required prior to any surface disturbance in areas where vertebrate fossil-bearing formations are exposed or lie at shallow depths (to 150 feet).

*Such surveys will protect paleontological resources from destruction by surface-disturbing activities.*

FOREST PRODUCTS

Background

The timber resource on public lands in the McCone Planning Unit consists of an estimated 855 acres of western juniper and 410 acres of cottonwood. Demand is low or non-existent for these forest products. Less than 10% of the public forest land is legally accessible, and most of the junipers are of low quality and small size.

Juniper occurs as individual trees or in very small clumps on the ridges of the badlands. Forest-like stands are rare. Cottonwood occurs in greater overall abundance, though the majority of the stands are on private lands on flood plains of the Missouri River and its tributaries. For both juniper and cottonwood resources, no information about the age, size, stocking, mortality, condition, site index, growth, and yield of the stands is available.

The multiple-use decisions for the Forestry program are aimed at the accomplishment of several objectives: (1) inventory and classification of all forested areas on public lands for production capability, (2) establishment of parameters of supply and capability of each timber species for each product and development of baseline data for determining reclamation needs on disturbed sites, (3) protection of existing forests or woodlands from depletion (with a few exceptions), deterioration and destruction until the resource can be properly evaluated, and (4) preservation of the long-term productivity of forest soils.

Resource Decisions (& Rationale)

1. Inventory

   An intensive "in-place" inventory and stand analysis for production (soils and site) capability classification will be completed for all forested tracts of public land.

   *Inventory and classification is needed to provide baseline data for locating, quantifying, and assessing the production potential of hardwood and conifer forests.*

2. Forest Management Plan

   A forest management plan for the future harvest and/or protection of timber and other vegetative products will be developed for the McCone Planning Unit as forest inventory and capability classification is completed.

*A forest management plan will establish the parameters of supply and capability of each timber species for each product and will provide basic data for determining reclamation potential and rehabilitation needs on disturbed sites and for preparing resource activity plans. This plan may include an allowable cut prediction, "in-place" forest products map, harvest schedules and priorities, intermediate silvicultural treatment needs, biological and natural physical interactions, control and salvage, rehabilitation needs, and reclamation potential of disturbed sites.*

3. Forest Depletion, Deterioration, and Destruction

a. Existing conifer and hardwood stands will be protected from significant depletion by any land use activity, except for incidental forest product sales to meet local needs after site-specific inventory and environmental assessment, and in areas where silvicultural needs are clearly evident or can be determined and forest resources can be assessed.

b. Existing conifer and hardwood stands will be protected from significant deterioration by any land use or biological activity (i.e., insects, disease, and animals). Control measures may include the use of approved chemicals.

c. Existing conifer and hardwood stands will be protected from destruction by land use activities (such as uncontrolled burning, utility corridors, and surface mineral extraction) and catastrophic biological interactions (i.e., epidemic bark beetle invasion, widespread porcupine attacks). Control measures may include the use of approved chemicals.

d. All mortality among conifer and hardwood stands (which are accessible and economically feasible) will be harvested. Harvests will be modified to protect other resources.

e. Timber harvests will be conducted in such a manner as to safeguard State and Federal water quality standards and to provide maximum protection of frail sites.

*Significant changes in the present character of the forests without baseline data analysis may have irretrievable negative impacts on production and restoration*

*Cottonwood trees are the most common forest type in the McCone Planning Unit, found on the floodplains of the Missouri River and other drainages. Much of this land is privately owned, however, so the scattered juniper trees on the more rugged uplands actually make up the majority of trees on public lands.*

*potential. With the conscientious environmental assessment of specific project proposals, adequate protection for all resources should be provided. Interim cutting may be done on a case-by-case basis without deleterious or irreversible impacts on a given stand, by inventorying and classifying production potential on each stand in question. Sufficient timber exists in non-critical wildlife habitat areas and in areas of low visibility to supply incidental demand. Harvests of mortality, especially from catastrophic disturbances, may be accessible and economically feasible. Such harvests would prevent loss of the resource.*

4. Soil Conservation and Vegetative Rehabilitation

a. Land use activities will be restricted on frail forest soils (shallow, heavy clays on steep slopes) when they are wet and yielding. The extent and type of restriction will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

b. Land use activities will be restricted on disturbed forest land until the affected areas are rehabilitated. Each situation will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

*Fragile soils are easily compacted, puddled, cut, and eroded when wet and yielding. Temporary restrictions may be necessary to sustain long-term production on these soils. Disturbed areas may sustain further damage from continued use, i.e., livestock grazing, trailing, ORV use, etc. The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) (1969) and FLPMA (1976) provide for protection and rehabilitation of disturbed and damaged land.*

c. Disturbed or damaged forest types will be rehabilitated by replanting with appropriate native species.

d. Studies will be conducted to determine the feasibility of reforesting small voids (usually 10 acres or less) between natural forest types.

*Rehabilitation will prevent further damage and reestablish site productivity. Sound forest management principles include the preference for development of large homogenous forest areas, rather than small broken forest type "islands." Authority and/or direction for intensive management, protection, and enhancement of this resource is implied in Bureau policy, the Material Sales Act of 1947, and FLPMA.*

RANGELANDS

Background

Overall, the rangeland in the McCone Planning Unit is in good to excellent condition.

There are 53 allotments in the unit, where public lands provide 40.8% of the forage used in the ranching operations. Total licensed use is 34,092 animal unit months (AUMs) with horses, cattle, and sheep authorized to graze the federal range.

There are three levels of grazing management intensity on public lands in the planning unit. Allotment management plans (AMPs) have been implemented on four allotments. In the remainder of the allotments, grazing is authorized by license or permit; 33 of these have defined seasons and numbers of livestock, and 16 are licensed (or permitted) on a yearlong carrying capacity basis.

The BLM range program's goal is to improve or maintain existing range conditions and available forage for livestock on public lands. Grazing management systems proposed as a means of reaching this goal will be finalized under Bureau policy and guidelines to insure compliance with NEPA and protection of other resources.

Resource Decisions (& Rationale)

1. Implementation of Allotment Management Plans

   For 26 allotments in the McCone Planning Unit, allotment management plans (AMPs) will be developed with grazing systems as a primary means for range improvement.

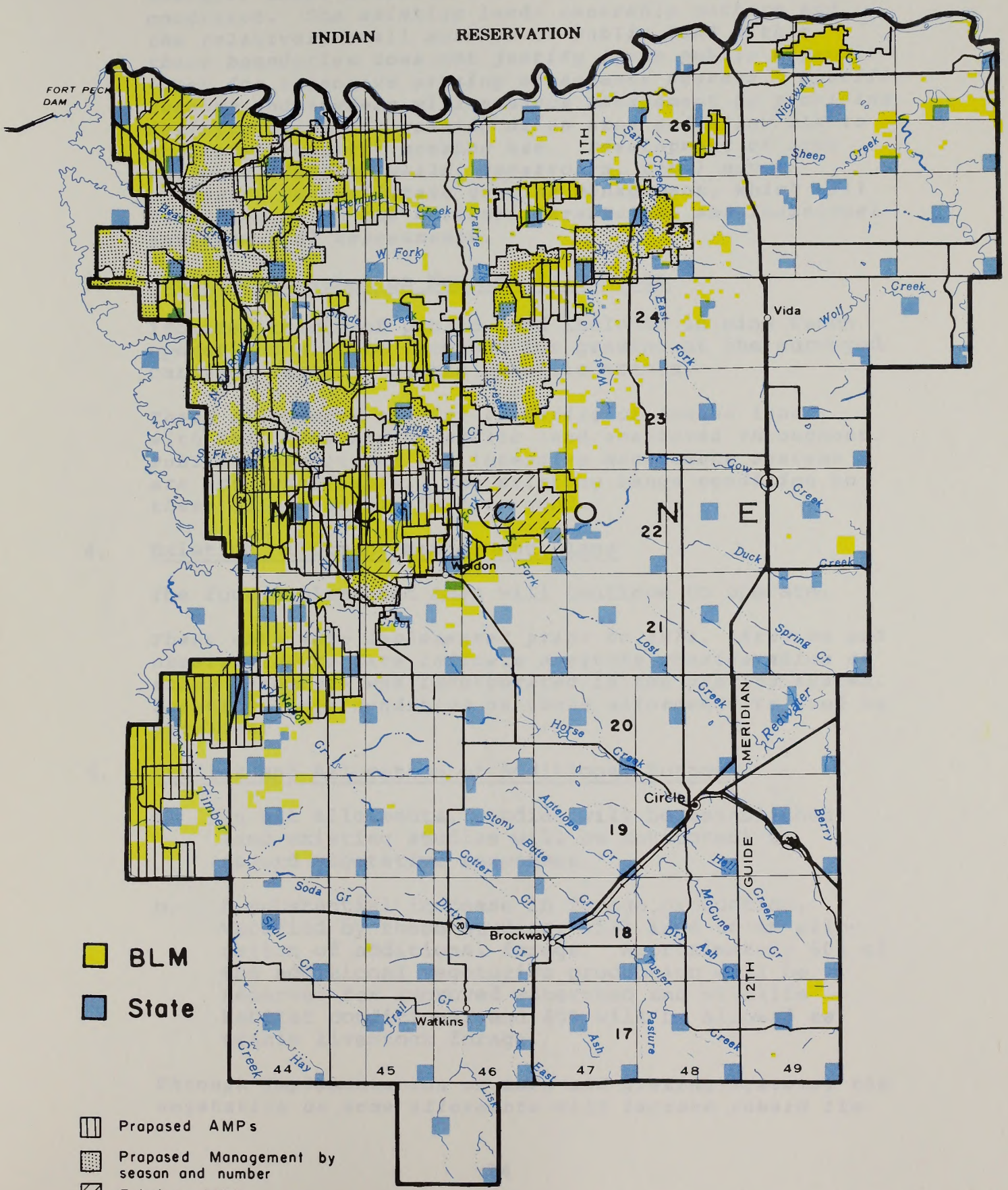
   *Recent inventories of these allotments (see map, page 23) have shown adequate public land and resources to be present on each one to justify expenditure of public funds for intensive management systems. Such management may require development of new stockwater reservoirs, wells and pipelines, fences, and other improvements. The Missouri "Breaks" Grazing ES and individual environmental assessments will help BLM managers to implement these plans.*

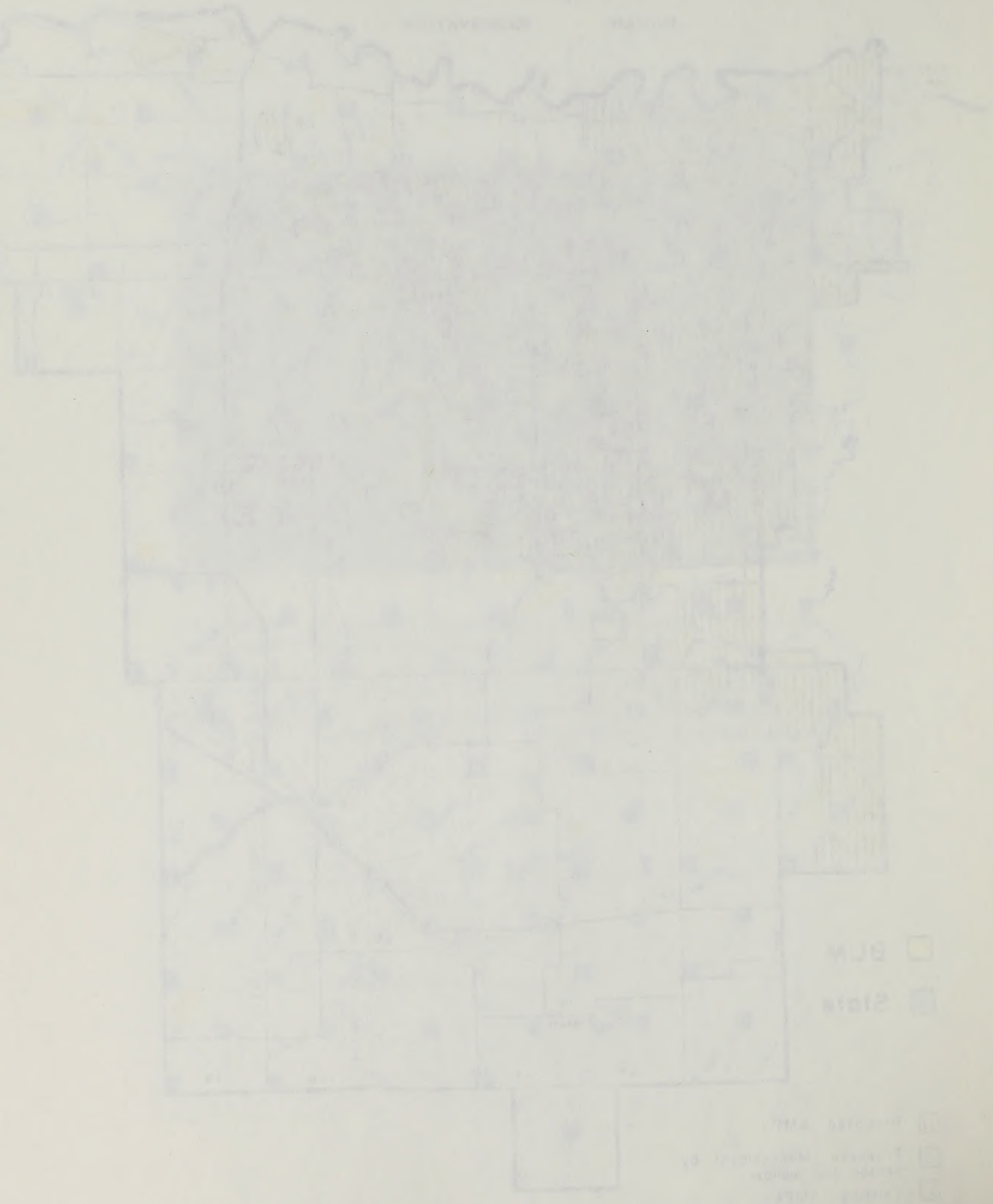
2. Allotment Management Plans Based on Season and Numbers

   On 14 allotments in the planning unit, livestock use will be authorized under grazing systems establishing specific seasons-of-use for set numbers of livestock.

*Differences in grazing management can result in "fenceline contrasts" like the one shown here. Note the absence of bunchgrass on the left side of the fence. Many factors influence the development of such contrasts: type of animal, season of grazing, numbers of animals, proximity to water or supplemental feed, range site potential, etc.*

# McCONE PLANNING UNIT
# RANGE MANAGEMENT





*Overall, these allotments have been found to be in good condition. The existing lands ownership pattern and the relatively small acreage of public land within their boundaries does not justify large public expenditures for intensive grazing management systems. Specific seasons and numbers will enhance management by providing definite plans for grazing of an area and allow BLM to accurately monitor grazing use. Development of some projects (fences, wells, reservoirs, etc.) may be necessary to facilitate grazing management, which will be addressed in the Missouri "Breaks" ES and individual environmental assessments.*

3. Livestock Grazing on Non-AMP Allotments

Isolated tracts of public land included in nine ranch operations will be licensed for grazing at the surveyed carrying capacity of the specific tracts.

*These allotments consist primarily of deeded lands, with small amounts of public land scattered throughout. Public expenditures for intensive management systems are not justifiable. The existing range condition on these allotments is fair to good.*

4. Existing Allotment Management Plans

The four implemented AMPs will continue to operate.

*These AMPs were implemented prior to 1975. Studies and observation to date indicate adequate consideration of other resources was incorporated in the grazing system. Existing range condition on these allotments is good to excellent.*

5. Studies and Allocation of Additional Forage

a. On all allotments, studies will be established (and existing studies will be monitored) to record vegetative responses.

b. A substantial increase in forage production, verified by these studies, will lead to an allocation of additional forage. Approximately 60% of the additional vegetative production will be reserved for improved watershed and wildlife habitat conditions, and 40% will be allowed as usable livestock forage.

*Through implementation of AMPs and grazing systems, the vegetation on some allotments will improve toward its*

*potential, based on site capability. Improvement in vegetative condition will benefit other resources, and these resources must be considered in decisions to allow additional grazing on an allotment. All decisions should be based on sound information, as provided by range and watershed studies.*

*Reservoirs are the most common form of livestock water in most of the planning unit. Besides providing water for grazing animals, they may be important as waterfowl habitat, fisheries, and watershed protection.*

WATERSHED

Background

BLM's watershed specialists deal with problems of erosion, water quality, and water yield of both surface and subsurface sources.

The soils in the planning unit are predominately heavy clays, with high shrink-swell capacity, low infiltration rates, and high salt content. Precipitation averages 11-12 inches per year. Runoff is low and fluctuates with precipitation events. The soils and the climate, through their effects on vegetation, are the largest factors influencing erosion and water quality in the area.

Vegetation is the key, in this planning unit, to protecting the soil and water quality. Vegetation is the most important type ground cover. A reduction of ground cover results in increased erosion and decreased water quality. In this semi-arid region of heavy soils and relatively low precipitation, plants have difficulty becoming established.

From the present data the erosion trend for the planning unit is thought to be stable or slightly improving. Severe or critical erosion conditions occur mainly in areas of geologic erosion along the "major drainages." There are a few areas where erosion is being accelerated by land use, i.e., poor farming practices, poor road design, or overgrazing. These areas are relatively small in acreage and have not been recorded or measured.

Surface water yield from the unit is of poor quality. The water is polluted by a heavy load of dissolved solids and sediments. In most instances, the U.S. Public Health Service water quality standards are exceeded by ground waters in the planning unit.

Resource Decisions (& Rationale)

1. Management of K-4 (Restricted Use) Areas (see map, page 28)

   On a case-by-case basis, lands and minerals development in these areas may be permitted with special stipulations. Livestock management within the area will be managed to ensure protection of watershed values. Off-road vehicle use will be restricted.

   *These areas have moderate and severe erosion activity, with high percentage of bare ground, steep slopes, and*

*highly erosive soils with slow infiltration rates. Any surface disturbance could double runoff velocity which would increase the cutting and silt carrying power of the runoff eight times, leaving some watershed areas damaged beyond repair. It is not realistic to fence the fragile lands for protection. However, soil disturbing activities can be reduced through careful examination and management of proposed development and grazing use.*

2. Management of K-5 (Management Use) Areas (see map, page 28)

   a. Livestock grazing in these areas will be managed to maintain or improve present watershed condition. If a positive trend does not occur under a grazing management system in five years, land treatments and reduction in livestock grazing will be considered. If no positive results are documented after 10 years, livestock grazing may be eliminated.

*These areas are in stable condition but have steep slopes and highly erosive soils with slow infiltration rates which are sensitive to physical disturbances as in Restricted Use Areas. Management of the vegetative cover through grazing management systems proposed in allotment management plans (see Rangeland Resource, page 23) should satisfy the requirements of this decision.*

   b. Surface disturbance will be minimized on slopes of greater than 30%, and allotment management plans as proposed under Rangelands Resource, page 23, will be adhered to.

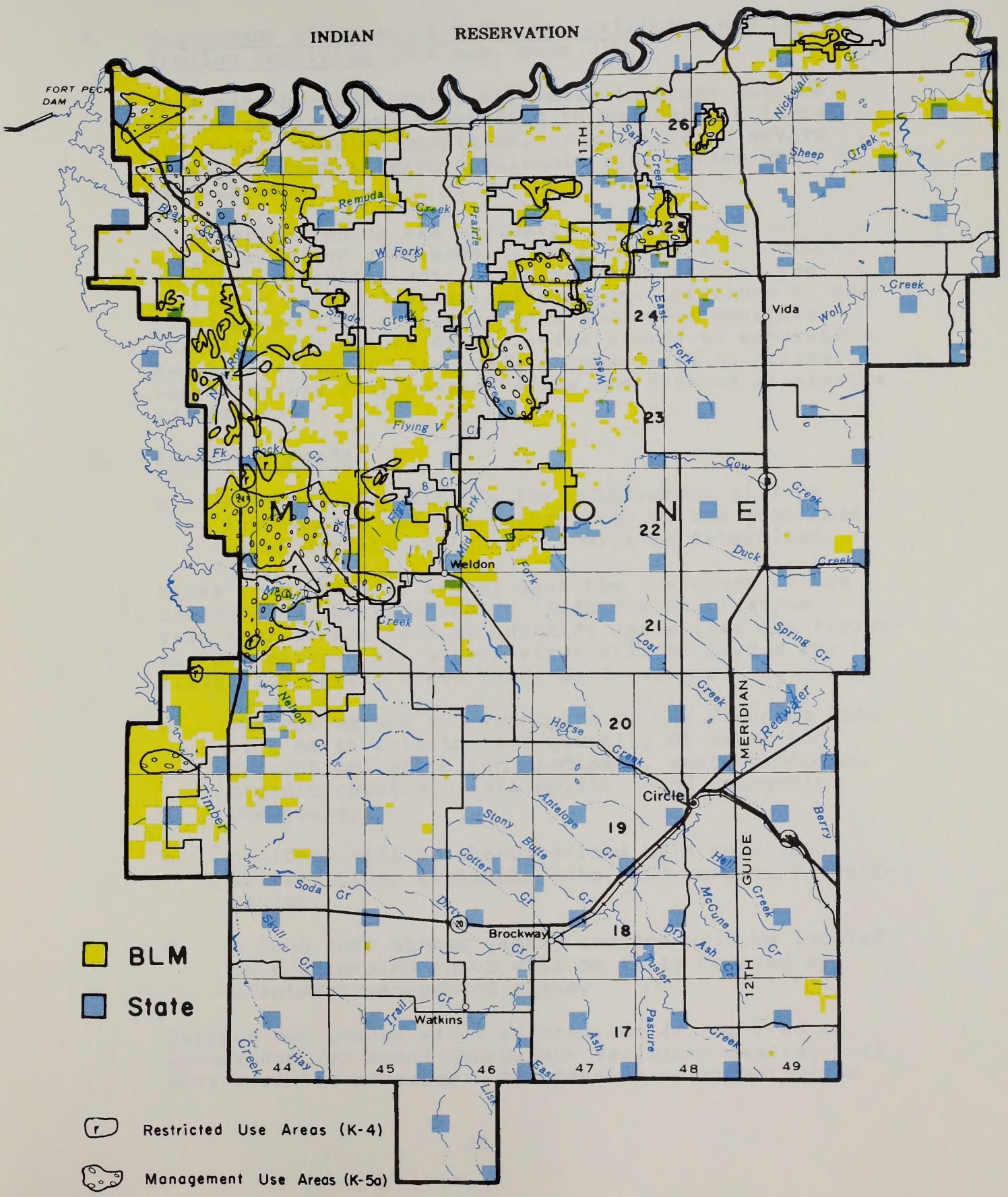
*These areas are presently in a stable or slight erosion condition class with soils of moderate erosion susceptibility. Through proper management, these conditions will be maintained.*

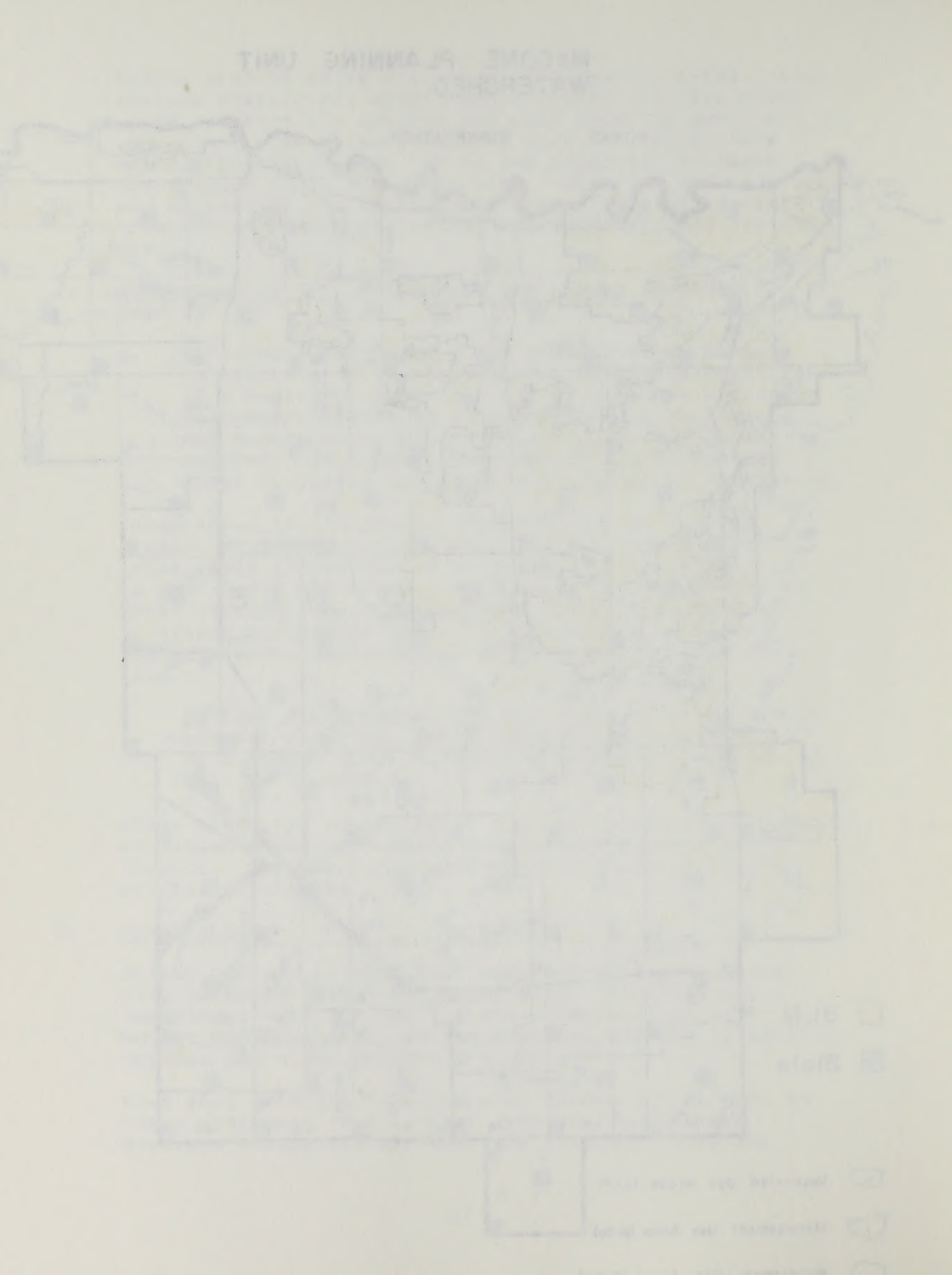
3. Firefighting

During periods of high soil and fuel moisture, fires will be fought with hand tools only. Firefighting techniques will include the use of mechanical dirt-moving equipment only during extended periods of extreme dryness and under emergency conditions.

*When soil moisture is high, more damage may be done by heavy equipment than results from the fire itself. However, during dry periods, the fire will burn hot*

# McCONE PLANNING UNIT WATERSHED





*enough to kill plant crowns. Extreme methods may be needed to protect lives and property.*

4. Management of Areas of Moderate, Critical, and Severe Erosion Condition (see map, page 31)

On a case-by-case basis, allowable land use will be authorized in areas identified in moderate, critical, and severe erosion condition, or moderate or severe erosion potential with applicable restrictive use stipulations.

*Stipulations which are currently used on minerals exploration and development, construction, and other surface-disturbing activities serve to protect the watershed from pollution and erosion. Distance of the development from waterways plus pollution controls minimizes the chance of pollution damage to watersheds. Rehabilitation of some areas is necessary to prevent runoff waters from concentrating and flowing at erosive velocities.*

5. Inventory Needs

a. Public lands suitable for cultivation will be inventoried and the suitability of the available water quality and quantity will be determined.

*FLPMA (P.L. 94-579) states that the Secretary of the Interior may develop public lands for cultivation. This implies the need to identify lands that are irrigable and reserve all waters which will be needed for irrigation should these lands be developed.*

b. Surface waters and waterways of the planning unit will be inventoried for quantity of water and current pollution from sediment, waste products, organic chemicals (oil spills), and inorganic chemicals.

c. Aquifers will be characterized by a well log survey, other available data, and on-site investigation.

d. A long term stream gaging station will be located on a watershed which will be fully covered by allotment management plans.

*Surface and ground water information is required as background for sound management decisions dealing with most resource programs. The Federal Water Pollution*

*Control Act (P.L. 92-500) requires knowledge of existing condition and maintenance or improvement of that condition in the future. These methods will provide an adequate data source and enable monitoring of future changes in the condition of the water resource in the planning unit.*

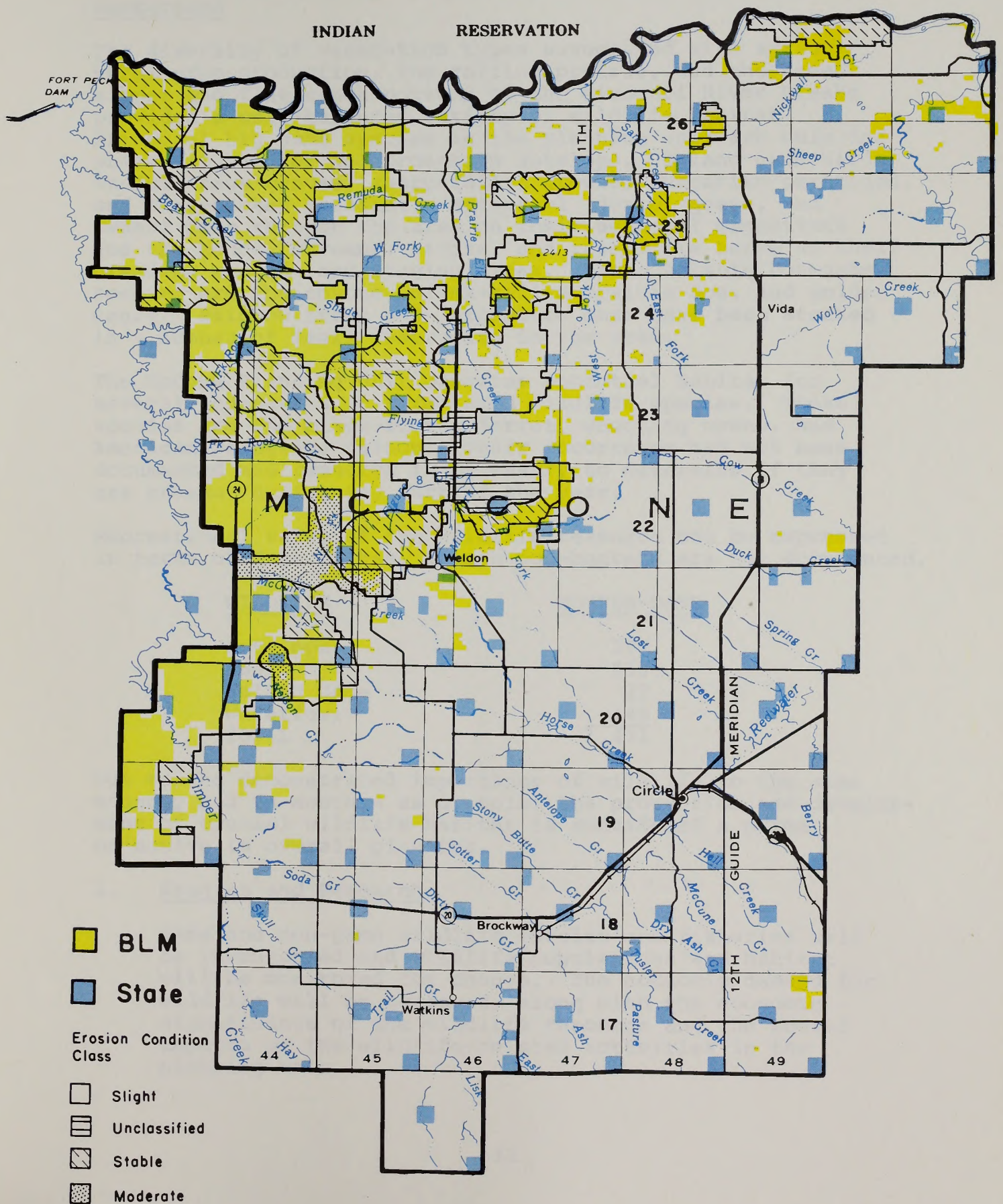
e. Riparian vegetation and the instream needs to maintain or improve this vegetation will be identified.

*Riparian vegetation is important to stream channel condition. In some cases, the instream needs to maintain this vegetation must be reserved under state law.*

f. As funds and manpower are available, the long range watershed plan will be more fully developed.

*Natural erosion is severe in the badlands where nearly every raindrop lands on the steep, bare, clay hillsides. Runoff volume and velocity is high, and flash floods commonly follow rainstorms. Heavy loads of silt are carried downstream to fill reservoirs with mud. In areas such as this, soil disturbance, and even livestock grazing, is discouraged.*

# McCONE PLANNING UNIT
# EROSION



WILDLIFE

Background

The diversity of vegetation types associated with agricultural crop production, the rolling prairie, and the steep slopes and flat creek bottoms of the Missouri River Breaks provides a well-balanced variety of wildlife habitat. Principal big game species in the planning unit are mule and white-tailed deer and pronghorn antelope. Upland game birds include sage grouse, sharp-tailed grouse, Hungarian partridge, and ring-necked pheasant. Waterfowl (ducks, geese, and swans) pass through the area on their seasonal migrations and the ponds, streams, rivers, and reservoirs serve as their breeding grounds and staging areas. Among notable non-game species are the coyote, black-tailed prairie dog, and golden eagle. Rainbow trout and largemouth bass have been stocked in a number of small reservoirs in the area.

The McCone Planning Unit contains potential habitat for several endangered or threatened wildlife species. These species are the black-footed ferret, whooping crane, and American peregrine falcon. Their occurrence has not been documented and research is necessary to determine if they are present during any part of the year.

Recreational value of the wildlife resource can be expressed in terms of days of use, though non-hunters are not documented.

| WILDLIFE | HUNTER-DAYS |
|---|---|
| Antelope | 297 |
| Deer | 959 |
| Upland Game | 27 |
| Waterfowl | 148 |
| TOTAL | 1,431 |

Due to the demonstrated importance of wildlife to the area economy and to Montana as a whole, the protection and development of crucial wildlife habitat is considered a prime objective in overall planning.

1. Studies and Research

   Game and non-game wildlife species and fisheries will be inventoried and wildlife populations and habitat will be monitored for change. The economic demand for wildlife will be assessed, along with the economic significance of the wildlife resource and the social impacts of the wildlife-related activities in the planning unit.

*Inventories and basic wildlife research provide the baseline data needed to arrive at adequate management decisions. FLPMA, the Taylor Grazing Act (1930), the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) (1969), and the Endangered Species Act (1973) all imply the need for basic information prior to management decisions.*

2. Habitat Expansion

   a. Habitat expansion programs, such as acquisition of land, transplanting terrestrial wildlife, and stocking of streams and reservoirs, will be pursued once studies have shown these programs to be necessary and feasible.

   b. In suitable areas, canals, level ditches, water control dikes, etc., will be constructed for waterfowl habitat.

*By creating new surface water and wetland areas, the overall carrying capacity (for waterfowl) of the planning unit can be greatly increased. This type of habitat development compliments the general increase in demand for all types of wildlife.*

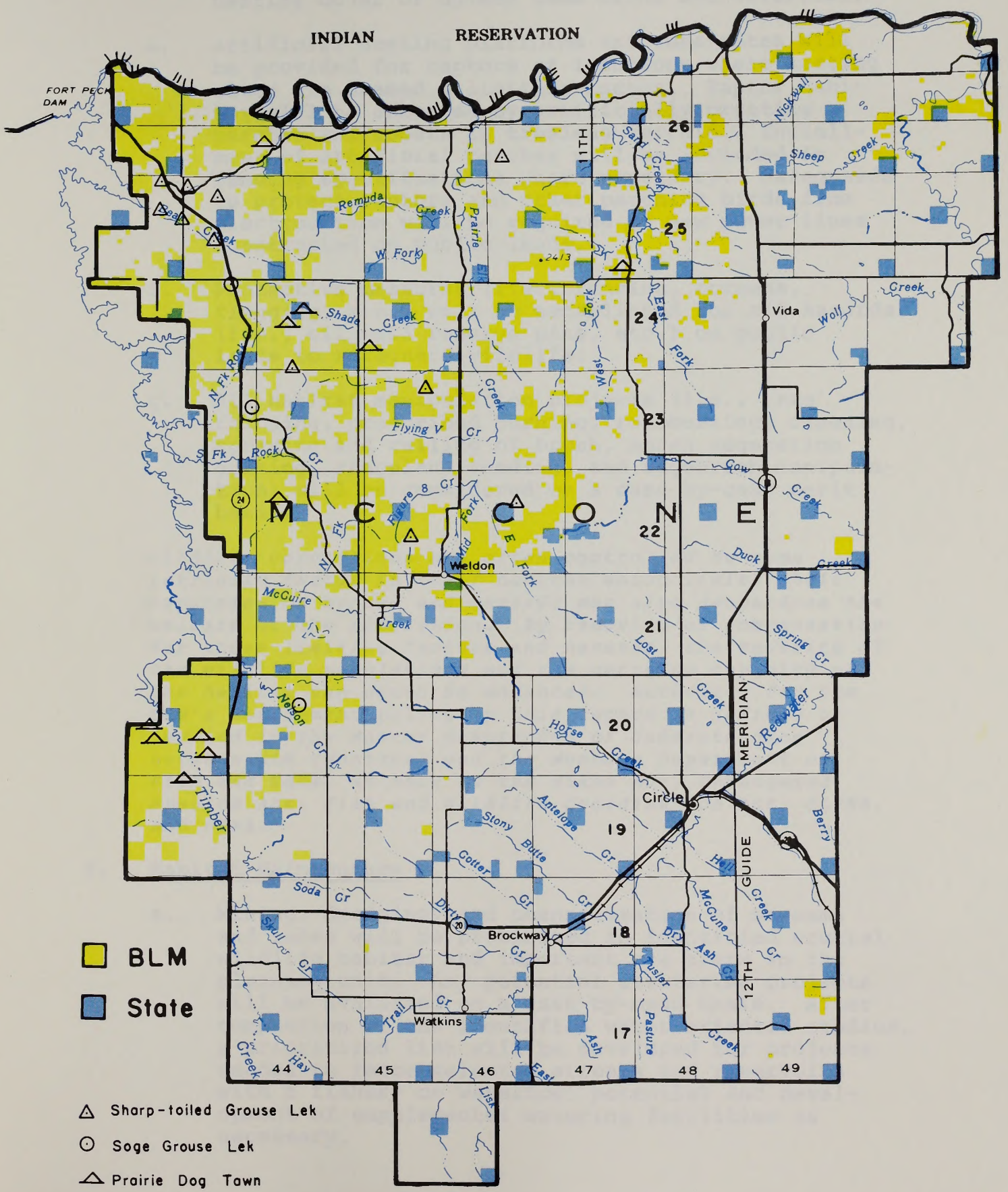
3. Habitat Improvement

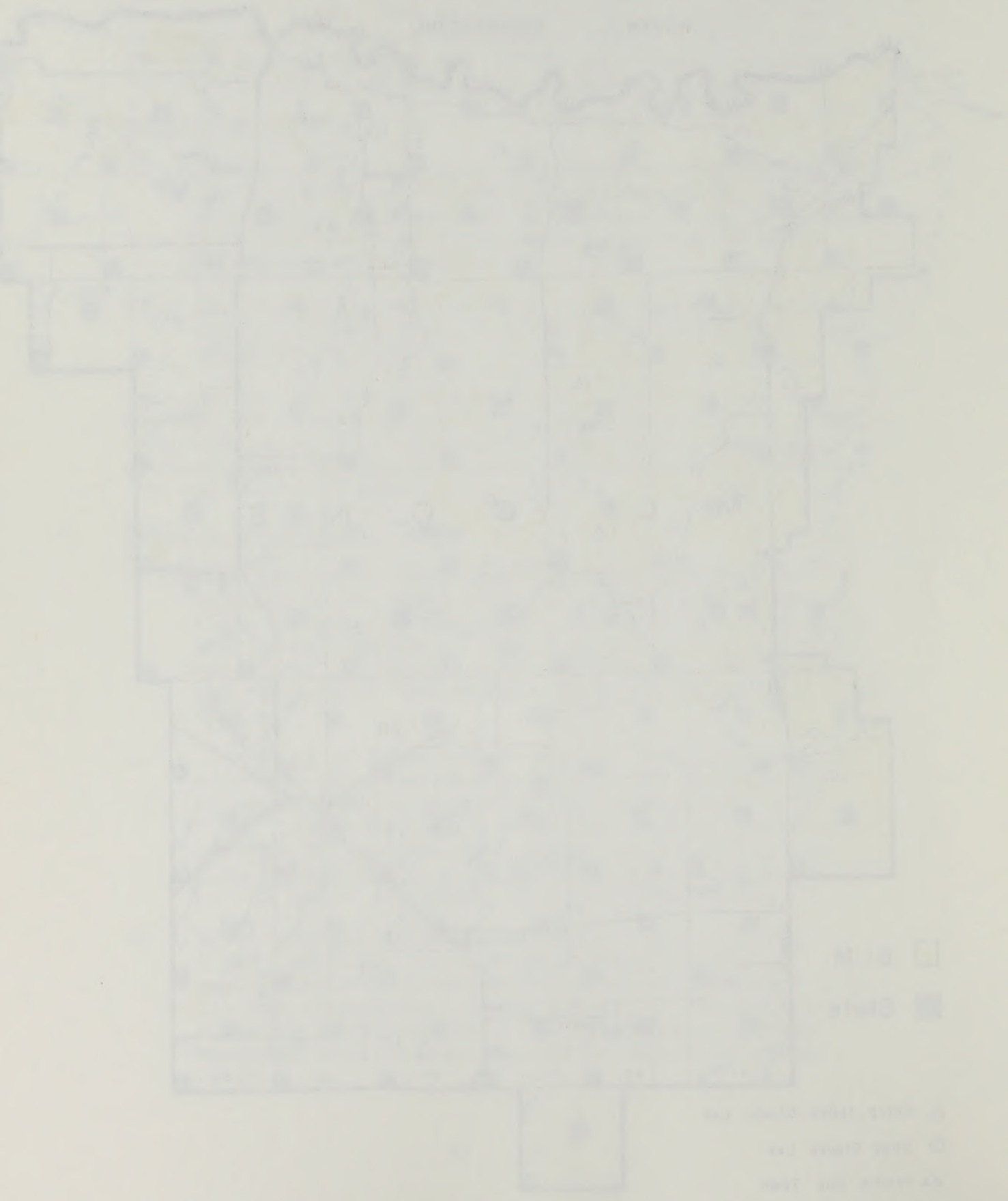
   a. Fish shelters, "instream" habitat improvement devices (i.e., dams, flumes, deflectors), plantings of aquatic, emergent, and riparian vegetation and fertilization of fish ponds, and control (as possible) of water levels will be used to improve the quality of the aquatic wildlife habitat in the unit.

   b. Plantings of food, cover plants, and provision of salt and grit, as appropriate, will be done in areas managed intensively for terrestrial wildlife. Applicable water sources will be developed to provide supplemental water for wildlife, and bird escape ramps will be constructed and installed in all stock watering tanks on public lands.

   c. Goose nesting islands, waterfowl nesting platforms, baskets, boxes, and loafing rafts, as appropriate, will be constructed concurrently with all new reservoirs, excepting those determined suitable for fisheries. As appropriate, these measures will be implemented on existing reservoirs.

# McCONE PLANNING UNIT
# WILDLIFE





d. Brush piles will be developed, as appropriate, for nesting cover of upland game birds and waterfowl.

e. Artificial nesting platforms and substrates will be provided for raptors at locations where nesting sites are deemed a limiting factor. Raptor habitat will be enhanced by artificially creating perches and roosts in treeless terrain. Installment of artificial perches will be included in fencing specifications where necessary. Safeguards to protect raptors and other perching birds from electrocution will be required on new power lines constructed on public lands.

f. Protective measures (i.e., fencing, screens, flagging, etc.) will be established for all hazards (i.e., oil well reserve pits, etc.) on public lands to safeguard wildlife.

g. All habitat manipulation projects (i.e., tree thinning, prescribed burning, rotobeating, cleaning, spraying and railing of brush, marsh vegetation cutting, rangeland seeding, and sagebrush manipulation) will be considered on a case-by-case merit basis.

*Wildlife populations are often controlled by some intrinsic factor in their habitat which limits their expansion or spread and hazards may also jeopardize the welfare of the population. By removing or compensating for these limiting factors and hazards, the security of the wildlife populations and the carrying capacity of the habitat can often be enhanced. Authority for the BLM's management policy in this regard is defined or implied in the Master Memorandum of Understanding between BLM (Montana) and the Montana Department of Fish and Game, as well as the Sikes Act, Endangered Species Act, Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act, FLPMA, and NEPA.*

4. Habitat Maintenance

a. Mining, dredging, and channelization of streams and lakes will be prohibited in identified crucial wildlife habitat and important use areas in the planning unit. Any potential dewatering projects will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. After completion of the identified water-oriented studies, a prioritized list will be developed for projects needed to fence selected streams and reservoirs with a fishery or waterfowl potential and development of supplemental watering facilities as necessary.

*On the open prairie, shrubs are important not only for the deer and antelope which rely on them for food. Many smaller animals (and birds) seek protection for nesting and escape from predators in these woody thickets. Healthy stands of shrubs are an important part of wildlife habitat.*

b. Haying, burning, logging, etc., will be restricted along stream sides and water bodies in the planning unit, unless these activities are part of a planned habitat improvement project for wildlife. Buffer zones or green belts will be created, as appropriate, along streams and reservoirs. Vigor of brush species on important wildlife use areas, especially coulee bottoms, will be improved by removal of livestock, either seasonally or year round, as necessary. No surface occupancy for oil and gas exploration will be allowed within 100 feet of creeks or flood plain perimeters, whichever is farthest.

c. Known wildlife nesting and roosting trees and cavities, as well as known wildlife "snags," will be maintained and protected from any man-caused physical disturbance.

d. Occupancy for surface disturbance purposes will be restricted or limited in known crucial habitat areas.

e. On turkey range, stands of ponderosa pine will be maintained at optimum levels of density (semi-open pole stands and some "dog-hair" stands) for protective cover and security for turkeys.

f. Livestock grazing on public land will be managed to allow for optimum residual wildlife nesting, brooding, escape cover, and ample wildlife forage. Livestock control by range retirement measures will be undertaken only if the desired protection cannot be achieved through grazing system manipulations or range improvement projects. Fences on public lands will be located and designed to restrict movement of wildlife as little as possible.

g. Normal (endemic) spread of insects and disease will be allowed in forested areas. On a case-by-case basis, fires in forested breaks may be allowed to burn until they can be controlled on natural fire lines, and unburned areas may be left within the fire line.

h. Artificial land treatments (contour furrowing, interseeding, etc.) will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

*The concept of maintaining ecosystem integrity by constraining surface disturbances to only those measures absolutely necessary for logical resource management is endorsed and mandated by state and federal laws. Ecosystem maintenance is directly related to the health and abundance of wildlife populations.*

5. Endangered Species

a. If management restrictions are insufficient for protection of identified endangered species habitat, those public lands will be legally withdrawn from any uses which jeopardize these habitat values.

b. BLM will participate in recovery plan implementation for endangered species on public lands in accordance with time frames identified in each recovery plan.

c. Black-tailed prairie dog towns will be maintained by restricting surface occupancy.

*Prairie dog towns are critical habitat for black-footed ferrets.*

d. Stringent law enforcement measures will provide protection of known endangered species habitat.

*Endangered species are those that require some special management consideration to maintain their populations at stable or improving levels. To safeguard endangered species habitat, special management emphasis and measures are directed toward these habitat areas. Authority for this management emphasis is derived from the Endangered Species Act, FLPMA, and NEPA.*

6. Animal Damage Control

Those species commonly known as predators will be recognized and managed for the public benefit. Excessive damage to livestock or game animals will be controlled as necessary only by the appropriate state or federal agency, using approved methods, in accordance with a comprehensive plan.

*Wildlife species known as predators help meet local and regional demands for wildlife-based recreation (i.e., hunting and trapping). In order to insure the safety of the public, and to prevent unnecessary killing of animals other than target species, all control work must be competently supervised. A planned approach to*

*Every spring, sage grouse return to their leks (strutting grounds) to dance their courtship ritual. Sage grouse (shown here) and sharp-tailed grouse use the same areas year after year. Protection of the leks will help insure their breeding success.*

*administration of animal damage control measures on public lands will consider the welfare of the ecosystem at large and efforts can be directed to specific problems. This approach is supported by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act; Bald Eagle Protection Act; NEPA, Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act; Federal Environmental Pesticide Control Act; Toxic Substances Control Act; Endangered Species Act; and Executive Orders 11643, 11870, and 11917 (Environmental Safeguards on Activities for Animal Damage Control).*

7. Pesticides, Rodenticides, Fungicides, and Herbicides

a. Only approved insecticides (with proper application) will be allowed on public lands.

*The detrimental effect of chlorinated hydrocarbons on the reproductive efforts of birds has been extensively documented. The most noted vegetative effects have been recorded for peregrine falcons, bald eagles, osprey, and pelicans. The McCone Planning Unit is within the existing or potential range of all these species.*

b. The use of selective, non-toxic control measures (i.e., shooting, trapping) will be encouraged as the primary approach to prairie dog control, when needed. "Perimeter control" of prairie dog towns will be employed as the primary means of eradication. Absolutely no rodenticides will be used within five miles of known black-footed ferret habitat.

*By exercising selective control on an "as needed" basis, the basic prairie dog town ecosytems and complexes can be preserved. The removal of chemical control from most situations eliminates a very dangerous environmental hazard and encourages a more discriminatory approach to control activities.*

c. The most applicable and least damaging methods will be used to control weedy species on public lands (after analyzing their positive/negative values).

*Montana state law requires aggressive control of officially recognized noxious weeds. State and federal environmental laws also require the evaluation of actions causing environmental degradation. Many "weed" species are important food items in the wildlife diets and provide cover for ground-nesting birds, small mammals, and reptiles.*

8. Water Quality

The use of chemical toxicants and mechanical pollutants will be prohibited in or immediately adjacent to streams, lakes, or ponds within the planning unit.

*Many pollutants can be activated by water or carried to areas where their presence is undesirable. By keeping these materials out of the water and far enough away to prevent their entry, this hazard can be minimized. Legal authority comes from, along others, the Federal Water Pollution Control Act, Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act, Water Quality Act, Clean Water Restoration Act, and NEPA.*

9. Habitat Management Plans

Habitat Management Plans (HMPs) will be developed on areas identified as meeting qualifying criteria.

*By developing HMPs on areas to be intensively managed for wildlife, emphasis and priorities can be identified and programmed for the benefit of wildlife habitat and populations.*

10. Program Coordination

a. The BLM will work closely with the Montana Fish and Game Department, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Geological Survey, U.S. Corps of Engineers, and Bureau of Reclamation on inventories, developing seasons, bag limits, planning projects, etc.

*Overutilization of forage by wildlife contributes to deteriorating habitat, range, and watershed conditions. It is desirable to maintain a balance between kinds of game animals to avoid unnecessary competition for habitat. The same areas that are important to wildlife are also important to other resources, so coordination of programs will assure a coherent and complimentary approach to land use where wildlife habitat and populations are concerned.*

b. Cooperative signing agreements, rights-of-way, legal access agreements, etc., will be used to assure general access to public lands with consideration for a quality type wildlife and recreation experience.

*Access to public law will encourage adequate harvest of game animals and realization of recreational potential of all forms of wildlife.*

RECREATION

## Background

In the McCone Planning Unit, 10,197 visitor days (in 1976) were attributed to public land. Over the next 10 years, this visitation is expected to increase by 22%. Information at hand suggests that visitor use other than general sightseeing is highly seasonal, with most of the pressure coming from hunters in the fall; however, non-consumptive and hobby-type recreational activities are not being inventoried at this time.

The trend for increasing recreational use of public lands, land use legislation, and Bureau policy all necessitate a closer examination of recreation management. The approved multiple-use recommendations (decisions) for the recreation resource provide BLM with a plan for inventory and action.

## Resource Decisions (& Rationale)

1. Campgrounds

   a. Study visitor use distribution by season, type, and location.

   b. Inventory each potential campsite (as shown on map, page 45)

   c. Develop a prototype design for the proposed campsites.

   d. Sites which are chosen for development will be considered for withdrawal from conflicting resource uses, where multiple use would detract from the recreational experience of the visitor.

   *Presently, there are no developed campsites in the planning unit. In accordance with the Bureau's policy of providing quality recreational experiences to public land users, and under FLPMA directives, the BLM should establish a controlled campground program within the planning unit to satisfy visitor needs for overnight facilities in the area.*

2. Fishing, Reservoirs

   a. Study the demand for reservoir fishing.

   b. As reports from the Montana State Department of Fish and Game become available, the BLM wildlife

biologist will compile a master list of reservoirs capable of supporting fish.

c. Reservoirs capable of supporting fish will be placed on a prioritized list for programs of fish stocking.

d. Public access will be secured to those reservoirs selected for fisheries development to meet identified demand for reservoir fishing in the area.

*The McCone Planning Unit has an abundance of reservoirs which were initially developed for livestock water, with fishing as a secondary consideration. The Montana State Department of Fish and Game is in the process of inventorying these reservoirs to determine their fisheries potential. Fish stocking should proceed in a logical system, depending on financial, social, and supply/demand constraints.*

3. Visitor Use Management

a. Continue to develop a recreation information program, including signs, maps, brochures, news releases, and public meetings.

*To meet requirements of FLPMA and BLM policy, the Bureau must balance consumptive use with resource capabilities. Innocent conflict situations might be avoided if the public is kept aware of Bureau policy, regulations, location of public lands.*

b. Cooperate with the state and county in a road construction and maintenance program based on public needs.

*A reliable road system is needed in the planning unit, since existing dirt roads are impassible during wet weather, which restricts the functional utility of the resource and limits the season of use for recreationists. However, public resource use is presently not sufficient to justify a BLM-funded road improvement program.*

c. Prepare an Off-Road Vehicle (ORV) Master Plan for the planning unit.

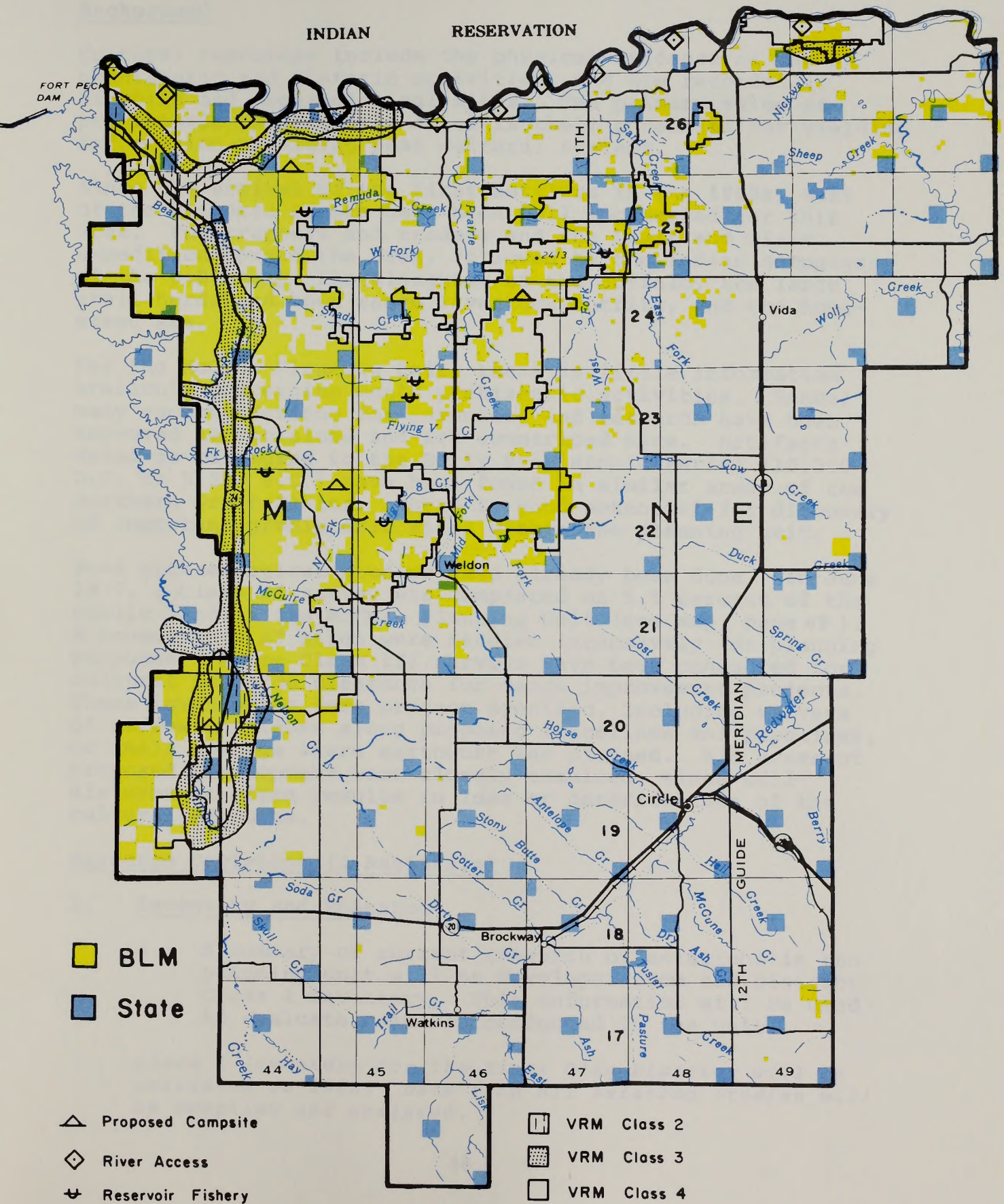
*As the popularity of ORV use grows, a balanced ORV plan would assist BLM in alleviating a multitude of resource problems (soil erosion, trespass, harassment of livestock, vandalism, etc.) while providing opportunities for those people interested in this activity.*

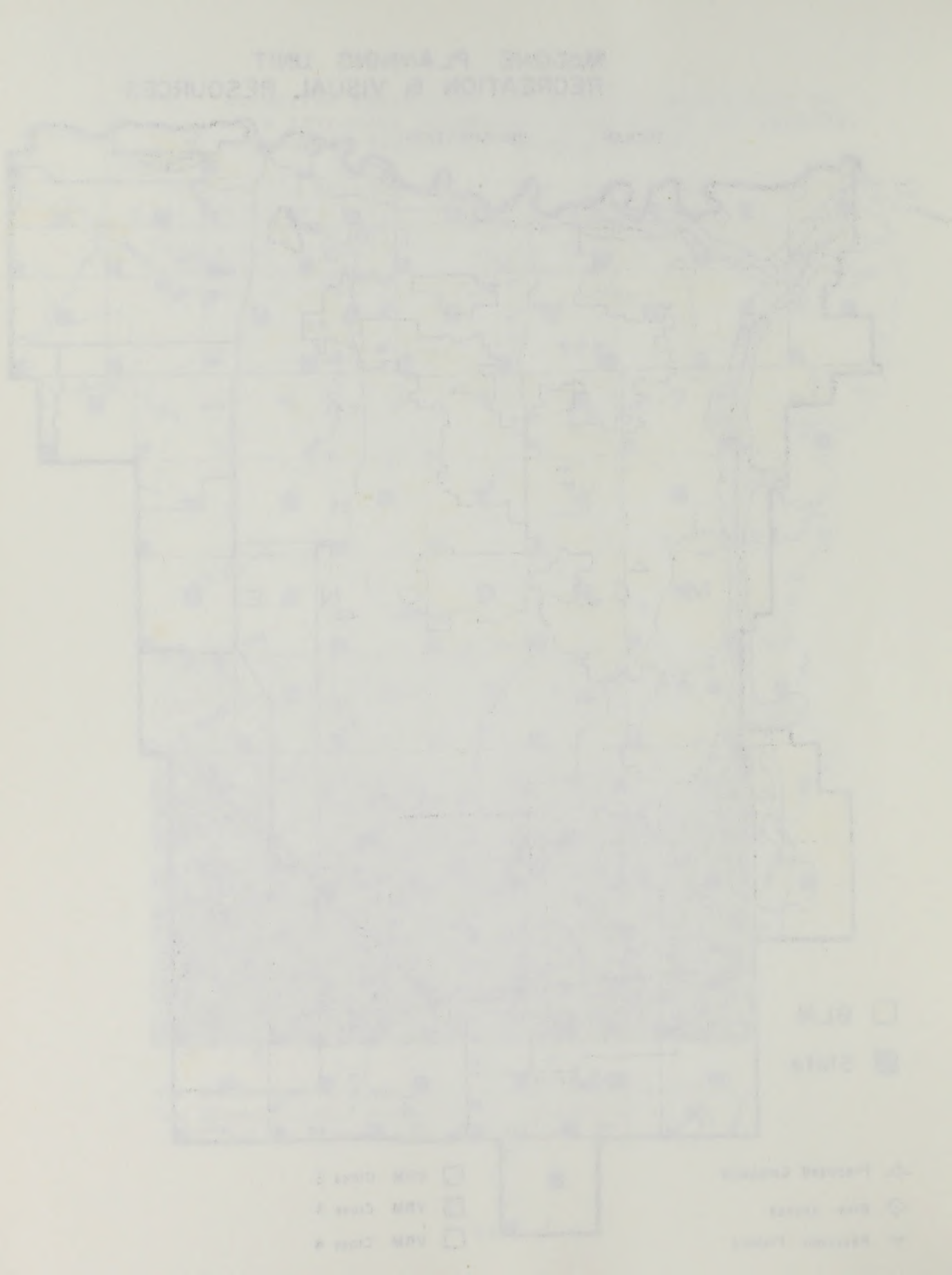
d. Authorize recreation and wildlife specialists to work irregular schedules during heavy use periods, especially during the hunting season.

*With public recreation there often comes an assortment of deviant behavior (vandalism, trespass, noise, litter, etc.). Having BLM personnel in the field on weekends and after regular hours during heavy use periods would contribute to the awareness, documentation, and possible control of these problems.*

*The Missouri River constitutes the northern boundary of the planning unit. Evaluation of this portion of the river for its recreational value has not yet begun.*

# McCONE PLANNING UNIT
# RECREATION & VISUAL RESOURCES





CULTURAL RESOURCES

## Background

Cultural resources include the physical evidence of man's prehistoric and historic activities, and are recorded as historic and archaeological sites. The primary value of prehistoric and historic sites is their potential for yielding information regarding past cultural systems.

Since the arrival of the first settlers in the 1800s, most of the historic events have been well documented for this area. Fur trappers and traders and the Lewis and Clark expedition opened the area, followed by the Indian campaigns of the U.S. Army, the slaughter of the buffalo, the large trail herds and open range livestock outfits, and the homestead era.

For the McCone Planning Unit, there is little information available concerning man's prehistoric activities. Hence, many recommendations for inventory and research have been approved as decisions and are summarized here. Artifacts dated as belonging to the Early Prehistoric Period (10,000 B.C. to 5,500 B.C.) have been found in similar areas of the Northern Great Plains. There is good potential for discovery of important prehistoric sites within the planning unit.

Some archaeological studies have already been done. In June 1977, a Class II survey was completed on 5.5 percent of the public land in the McCone Planning Unit (see map, page 48). A broad range of sites were studied intensively for planning purposes. A few Class III surveys have been conducted for cultural resource clearance for range improvement projects. These inventories were project specific, including surveys of narrow corridors along proposed fencelines and pipelines, or small acreage where earthwork was planned. All areas of proposed development were closely examined, since soil disturbance often results in loss or deterioration of the cultural resource.

## Resource Decisions (& Rationale)

1. Inventory and Research

   a. A summary of current research orientations in the planning unit will be developed from the District Class I inventory. This information will be used to evaluate research conducted in the unit.

   *Class I inventory for the Miles City District will be initiated in 1978. Data from all existing studies will be compiled and analyzed.*

b. Class II inventory of public lands will be continued throughout the planning unit as manpower and funding permit.

*The results of additional Class II inventory will be used to test the statistical reliability of the 1977 study. The survey should also add much needed data on the significance of cultural resources in the unit.*

c. Selected sites will be studied through testing, data recovery, and analysis to better understand the nature of cultural resources for management purposes.

*In order to know the quality and quantity of information which can be derived from various kinds of cultural resources, some research is needed. The ability to realistically evaluate cultural resources has obvious management utility. It is necessary to arrive at standards for properties to be placed on the National Register, and to determine areas of critical environmental concern. (Public Law 89-665 and FLPMA require the identification of such areas.)*

d. All cultural resource research on public lands within the planning unit will be monitored through stipulations to Federal Antiquities Permits.

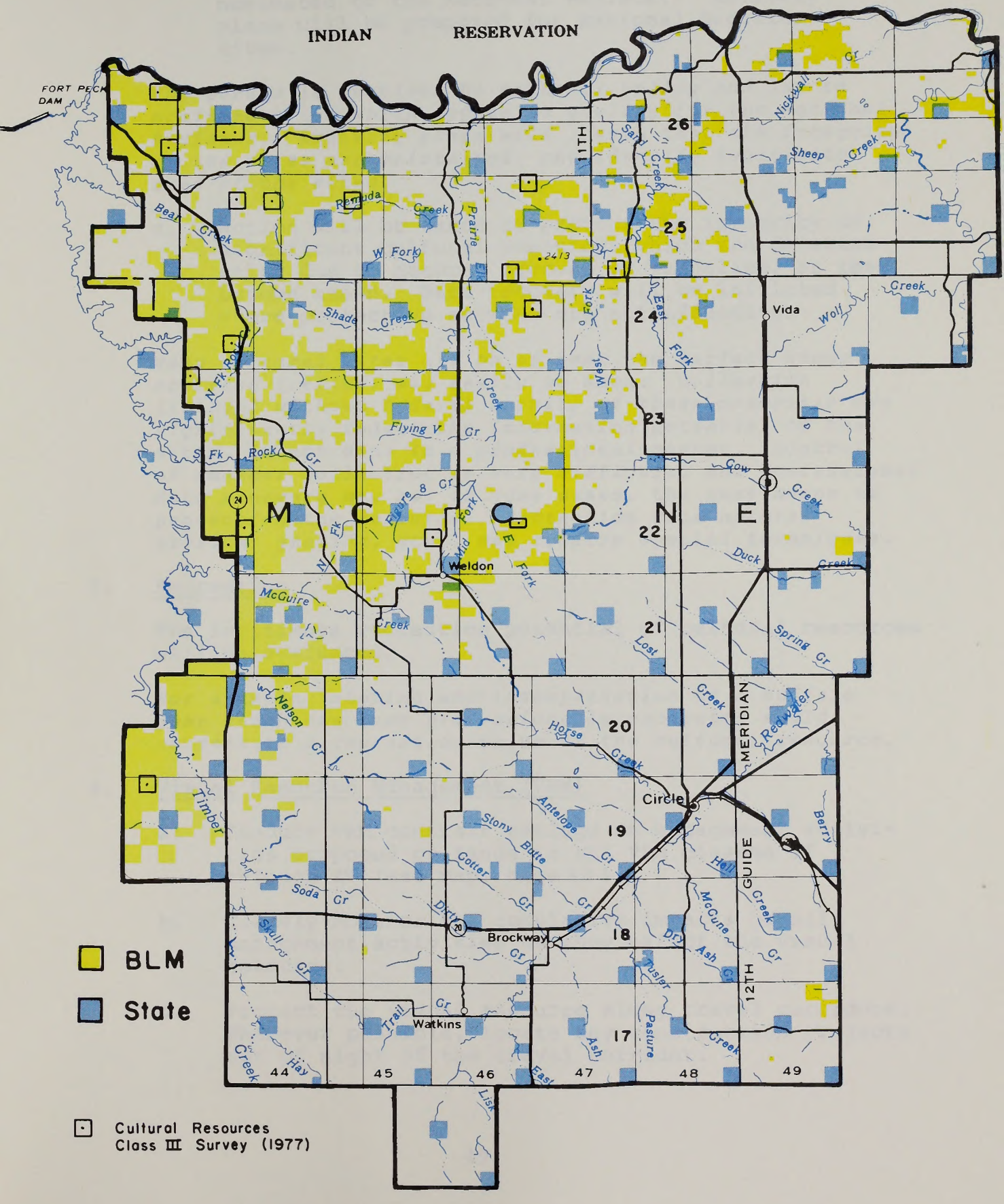
*Stipulations will insure that the District can monitor and review the work of the permit holder for adequacy. Data recovery often necessitates the destruction of the cultural property, so it is very important that the methods are adequate.*

2. Protection

a. In all areas of the unit not previously inventoried, Class III inventories will be performed on all proposed project sites prior to surface disturbance, including Bureau and non-Bureau activities on public lands. In addition, Class III inventories will be conducted on lands being considered for disposal or exchange.

*Class III inventories determine if prehistoric or historic sites may be affected by Bureau (or non-Bureau) action. Such inventories are required by the Historic Preservation Act (1966), Executive Order 11593, and NEPA. Most problems identified by these cultural resource surveys can be resolved by project redesign.*

# McCONE PLANNING UNIT
## CULTURAL RESOURCES



b. Cultural resources which appear qualified will be nominated to the National Register. Activity plans will be prepared for National Register sites.

*The Bureau is required by national policy and law to nominate sites which appear to qualify for the National Register. Activity plans will insure that the integrity of the sites are maintained, and identify legitimate uses of the sites.*

c. Action will be taken to protect the integrity of significant cultural resources which are deteriorating due to natural process or vandalism, as they become known. Data recovery will be initiated where protective actions are not effective.

*Many cultural sites are on or near the surface where artifact (relics) may easily be seen. Collection (illegal without Federal Permit) of these materials may significantly reduce the information potential of the sites, if not done in a professional manner. Control of amateur collecting is very difficult, and professional data recovery may be, in some cases, the best means of protecting the resource. Protection from natural erosion, grazing, etc., may require special techniques.*

3. Recreation

The legitimate recreation potential of cultural resources will be evaluated.

*For example, signing and interpretation of a buffalo jump which has been professionally excavated would constitute a recreation value of the cultural resource.*

4. Visual Resource Management (VRM)

a. Conduct VRM contrast ratings on management activities proposed on lands in all VRM classes II through IV (see map, page 45 ).

b. Closely monitor the cumulative impacts of all management activities as they affect the visual resource.

c. Protect the visual resource along travel corridors. Wherever possible, locate any construction projects out of sight of the travel corridor.

*This combination of rugged badlands, scattered forest, and in the distance, the Fort Peck Reservoir qualifies as Class A scenery.*

*The McCone Planning Unit does not include large expanses of severely eroded badlands. However, the isolated badlands areas deserve their Scenic Quality "B" rating for variety in form, line, color, and texture.*

*Most of the planning unit is rolling prairie, and without distinct scenic features. The rating = C.*

*Visual Resource Management (VRM) is a system used to evaluate visual resources and determine what degree of management is necessary.*

*VRM classes are based on maintaining the natural character of the landscape. That character is determined between the four basic elements of form, line, color, and texture. All of these elements are in a landscape to varying degrees. Scenic quality ratings (A, B, C) and VRM classes (1, 2, 3, 4) (as shown on map, page 45) are to classify visual resources.*

d. Initiate revegetation programs on selected disturbed areas where current revegetation techniques indicate a reasonable chance for success and natural revegetation is not feasible.

e. Wherever feasible, adverse impacts of identified significant intrusions will be reduced by project redesign, vegetative screening, removal, or other appropriate measures.

*The visual resource has been recognized as an important element of the human environment. NEPA, FLPMA, and existing Bureau policy dictate that all public lands shall be managed to protect, maintain, enhance, and rehabilitate the visual resource. The contrast rating system is the only method available for evaluating proposed intrusion on visual quality. The landscape along travel corridors is especially sensitive to deterioration of visual resource quality, and these areas merit special attention. Revegetation programs and alternatives in project design and stipulations are ways of reducing the impacts of management activities on the visual resource.*

5. Wilderness Areas

a. Field check those areas which are identified as being potentially suitable for wilderness designation, and document their suitability or unsuitability.

b. Management decisions will ensure that the wilderness character of the documented suitable areas are not impaired, pending congressional decision.

*The Wilderness Act, FLPMA, and BLM manuals all provide directives and guidelines for the identification, study, and withdrawal of qualified wilderness areas. The specific identification of qualified areas will allow concentration of wilderness study in appropriate areas, and remove unneeded constraints on other lands. BLM is required by law to manage all lands with wilderness characteristics so as not to impair their value, pending Congressional designation.*

6. Missouri River

a. Time and money will be programmed through the Annual Work Plan for a preliminary field study of the Missouri River.

b. Long range inventory and study efforts will be coordinated with appropriate federal, state, and county agencies.

*The Missouri River along the northern boundary of the planning unit is a historic waterway which may have potential as a scenic or recreation river. There are enough parcels of public land along the river between Fort Peck and Wolf Point to provide adequate staging, stopping, or access points. River floating is currently experiencing a growth in popularity and the potential recreational value of the river should be evaluated, consistent with BLM policy and FLPMA.*

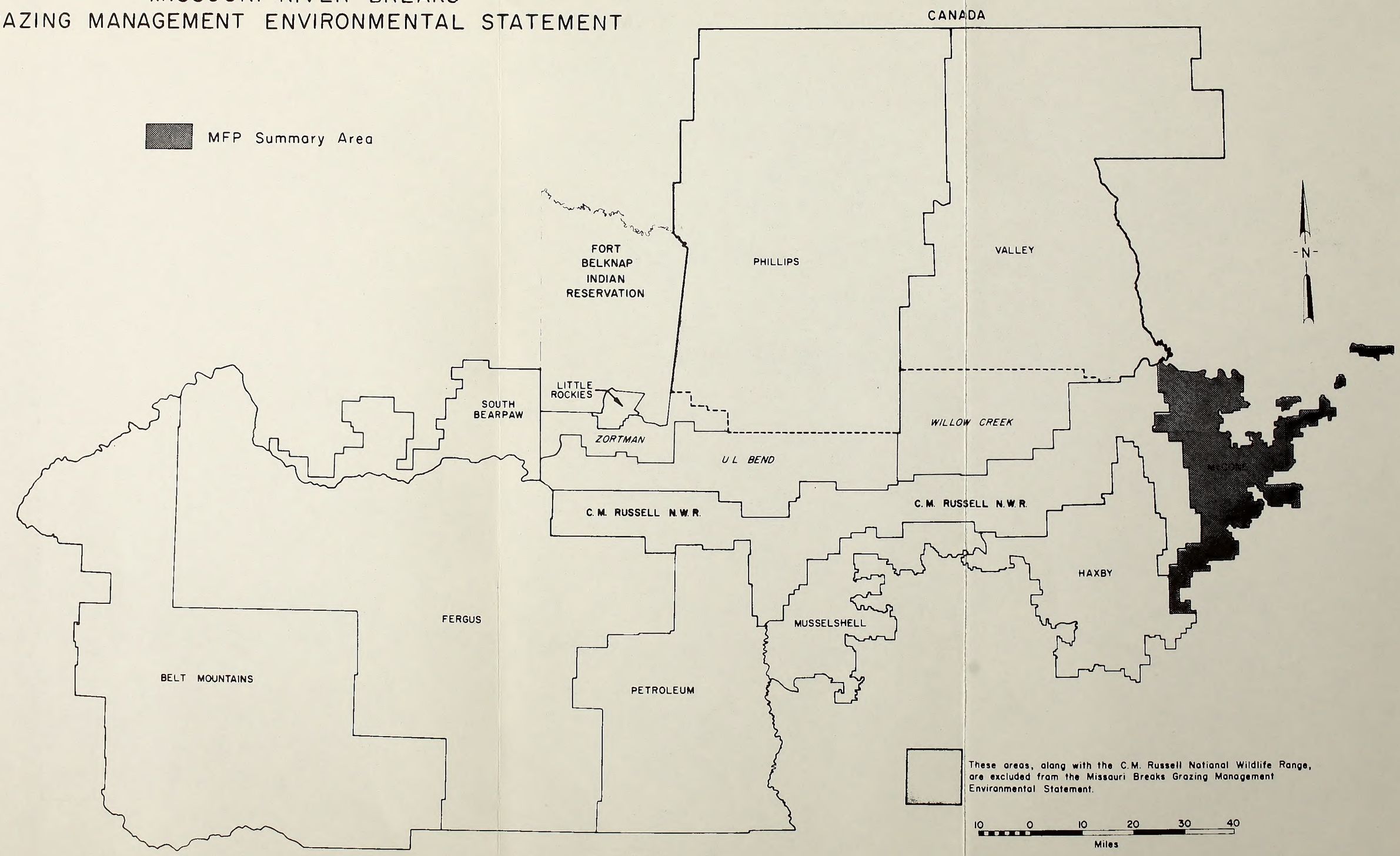
*Stone circles, or "tipi rings" as they are called, were found at several locations during the 1977 survey. These archaeological sites consist of circles of stones, which may have been used to hold down the walls of tents, or "tipis," though the circles are somewhat smaller than the Indian tipi of more recent history.*

## Interrelationship With Other Plans

The Charles M. Russell National Wildlife Range (CMRNWR), managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), borders the northern part of the planning unit. Many ranch operations include allotments of public land administered by BLM as well as lands within the game range. The Management Framework Plan decisions, as outlined here, do not deal with the CMRNWR. However, the need for coordination of activity plans (especially grazing plans) between the BLM and the USFWS is obvious. A new planning effort on the game range is being initiated by the USFWS. As their decisions are finalized, cooperation between the BLM and the USFWS will insure the sound management of all public lands in the area.

The Fort Peck Indian Reservation currently does not have any comprehensive multiple use plan. The reservation, however, does have a multiple use policy which stresses management for the best uses based on detailed resource inventories. BLM management decisions for protection and enhancement of watershed, wildlife habitat, aesthetic resources, and maintenance of livestock levels should indirectly benefit the reservation. There do not appear to be any BLM resource allocations which would adversely affect the cultural values or lifestyle on the reservation.

# MISSOURI RIVER BREAKS
# GRAZING MANAGEMENT ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT



## Actions After the MFP

The finalized management framework plan is the basis for on-the-ground actions in the McCone Planning Unit. These actions will be subject to the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act, except for those which are non-discretionary due to other laws (i.e., wilderness review/ withdrawal, and endangered species protection).

Environmental assessments will address the environmental, wilderness, and socio-economic impacts of each proposed action, providing basis for its acceptance, modification, or rejection. The implementation of allotment management plans and issuance of BLM grazing licenses/permits will be the subject of the "Missouri River Breaks Grazing Environmental Statement," scheduled for completion in August 1979 by BLM Montana State Office, Branch of Environmental Coordination.

It may be some time before some of these MFP decisions are carried out, since on-the-ground actions to be initiated by BLM depend on Congressional funding. Implementation is also dependent upon completion of wilderness review as required by the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA).

Any major changes in this plan will be subject to public review and comment. It is anticipated that this plan will provide the basis for resource management to both the District and Resource Area staffs for approximately 10 years. A program of resource inventory will continue to monitor any changes which may lead to modification of resource use. Significant changes in federal, state, or public policy or attitudes may also cause revision of this management framework plan.

The Musselshell, Haxby, and McCone Management Framework Plans provide management decisions and land use allocations for the vast majority of BLM lands within Garfield and McCone Counties. The southern and eastern portions of McCone County have relatively scattered tracts of BLM lands and is included within the Circle Planning Unit. This unit, together with eight other planning units (see map, page 6), comprise the balance of the Big Dry Resource Area. Preliminary inventory and planning efforts are currently underway for these nine units. The management framework plans and associated environmental statement are currently scheduled for completion by 1984.

## MONTANA BLM ORGANIZATION

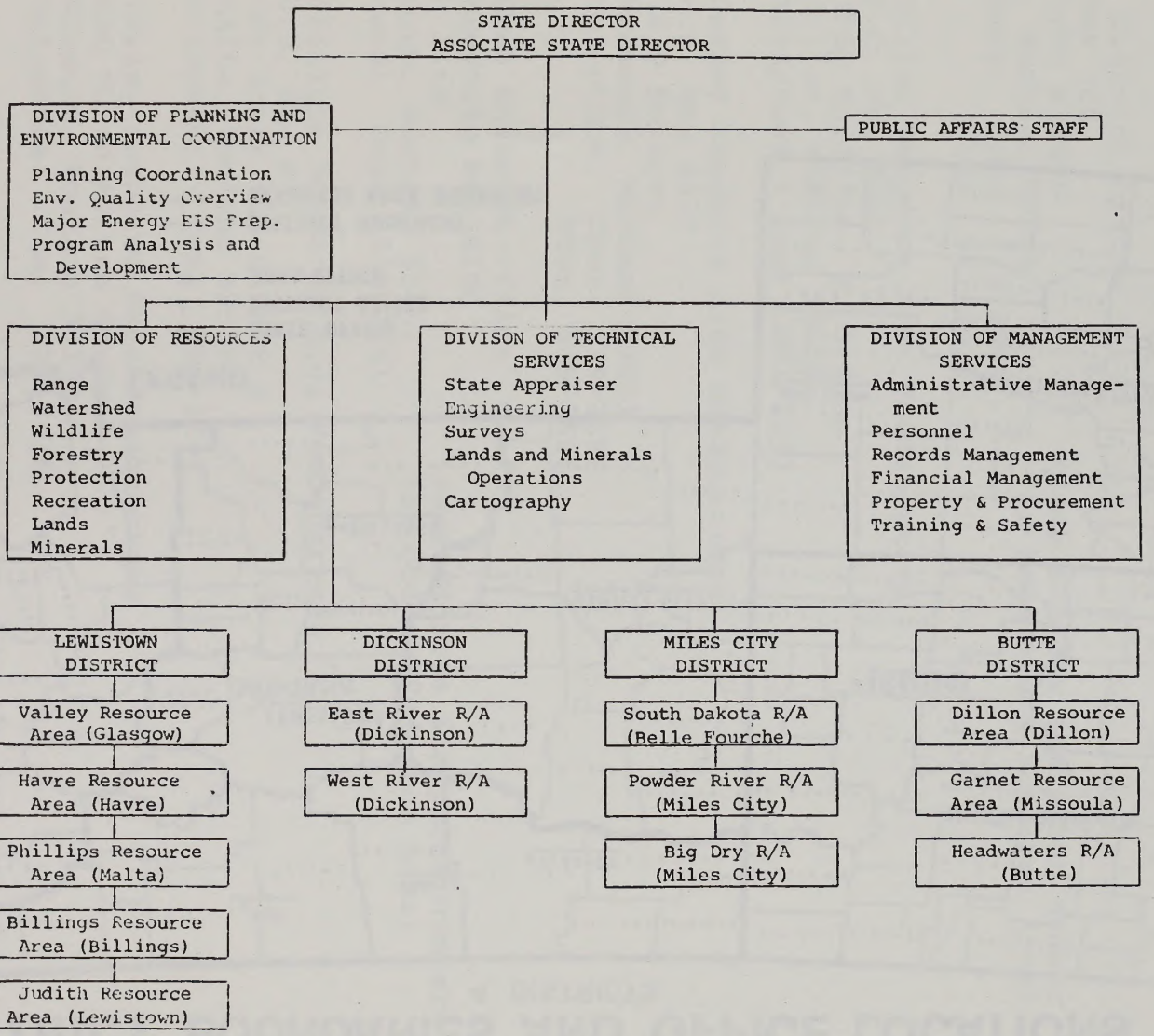
The Bureau's work in Montana, North Dakota, and South Dakota is administered from a State Office headquarters located in Billings, Montana. Within these three states, the 8.4 million surface acres and 55 million* subsurface acres of public lands are further divided administratively into four districts with District Offices in Butte, Lewistown, and Miles City; and Dickinson, North Dakota. Each District is divided into Resource Areas to facilitate day to day administration and long term management on a multiple use basis.

The surface and subsurface acreages administered by the four BLM Districts are noted in the table below:

ACREAGE STATISTICS
MONTANA BLM ORGANIZATION

| DISTRICT | SURFACE OWNERSHIP BLM | SURFACE OWNERSHIP OTHER | SUBSURFACE OWNERSHIP BLM | SUBSURFACE OWNERSHIP OTHER | TOTAL ALL OWNERSHIP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Butte | 1,334,000 | 33,456,400 | 2,285,345 | 32,505,054 | 34,790,400 |
| Lewistown | 3,884,701 | 33,167,885 | 8,177,983 | 28,879,603 | 37,057,586 |
| Miles City Montana | 2,785,299 | 17,363,119 | 10,910,741 | 9,237,677 | 20,148,418 |
| S.Dakota | 276,000 | 48,335,200 | 800,000 | 47,811,200 | 48,611,200 |
| Dickinson | 68,000 | 44,266,720 | 4,968,000 | 39,366,720 | 44,334,720 |

*BLM directly administers approximately 28 million acres of mineral estate and is the leasing agent to an additional 27 million acres of land administered by other federal agencies.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ASSOCIATE STATE DIRECTOR
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Planning Coordination
Env. Quality Overview
Major Energy EIS Prep.
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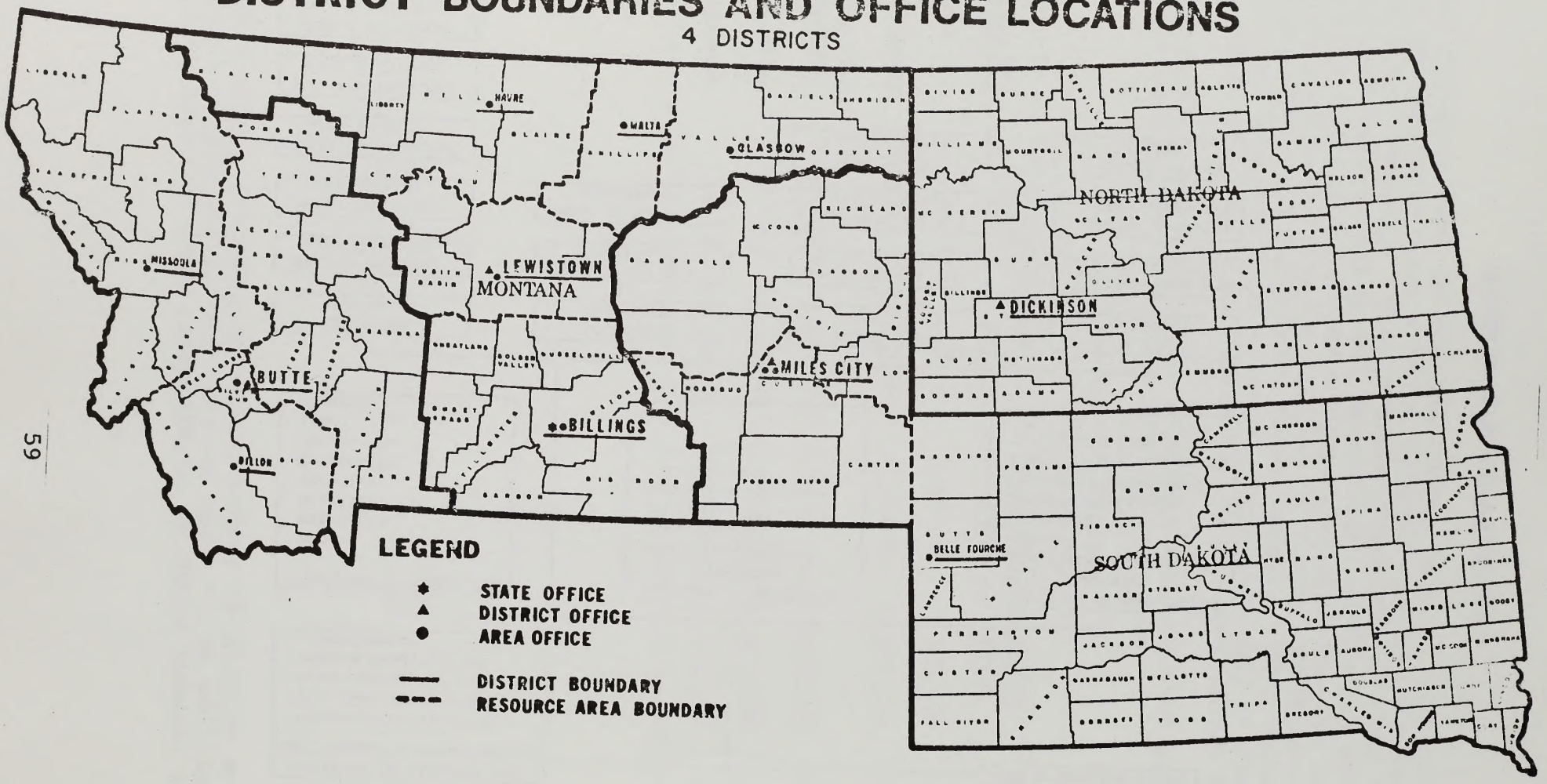
Cartography
DIVISION OF MANAGEMENT SERVICES
Administrative Management
Personnel
Records Management
Financial Management
Property & Procurement
Training & Safety
LEWISTOWN DISTRICT
Valley Resource Area (Glasgow)
Havre Resource Area (Havre)
Phillips Resource Area (Malta)
Billings Resource Area (Billings)
Judith Resource Area (Lewistown)
DICKINSON DISTRICT
East River R/A (Dickinson)
West River R/A (Dickinson)
MILES CITY DISTRICT
South Dakota R/A (Belle Fourche)
Powder River R/A (Miles City)
Big Dry R/A (Miles City)
BUTTE DISTRICT
Dillon Resource Area (Dillon)
Garnet Resource Area (Missoula)
Headwaters R/A (Butte)

# DISTRICT BOUNDARIES AND OFFICE LOCATIONS

4 DISTRICTS



ADDRESSES
Montana BLM Organization

Montana State Office
222 North 32 Street
P.O. Box 30157
Billings, Montana 59101
Telephone: Com: 657-6561
FTS: 585-6561

Butte District Office
P.O. Box 308
220 North Alaska
Butte, Montana 59701
Telephone: Com: 723-6561
FTS: 585-2416

(Same address and phone number for Headwaters Resource Area)

Dillon Resource Area Headquarters
P.O. Box 1048
Ibey Building, N. Dillon
Dillon, Montana 59725
Telephone: Com: 683-2337

Garnet Resource Area Headquarters
P.O. Box 4427
1819 Holborn
Missoula, Montana 59801
Telephone: Com: 329-3686
FTS: 585-3686

Lewistown District Office
Bank Electric Building
Drawer 1160
Lewistown, Montana 59457
Telephone: Com: 538-7461

(Same address and phone number for Judith Resource Area)

Phillips Resource Area Headquarters
P.O. Box B
501 South 2nd Street E
Malta, Montana 59538
Telephone: Com: 654-1240

Valley Resource Area Headquarters
626 Third Avenue South
Glasgow, Montana 59230
Telephone: Com: 228-4316

Billings Resource Area Headquarters
810 E. Main Street
Billings, Montana 59101
Telephone: Com: 657-6262
FTS: 585-6262

Havre Resource Area Headquarters
Post Office Building
Drawer 911
Havre, Montana 59501
Telephone: Com: 265-5891

Miles City District Office
P.O. Box 940
West of Miles City
Miles City, Montana 59310
Telephone: Com: 232-4331

(Same address and phone number for Powder River and Big Dry Resource Areas)

South Dakota Resource Area Headquarters
310 Roundup Street
Belle Fourche, South Dakota 57717
Telephone: Com: 892-2526

Dickinson District Office
P.O. Box 1229
Pulver Hall
Dickinson, North Dakota 58601
Telephone: Com: 225-9148

# GLOSSARY

ACTIVITY PLAN. Detailed action plans for specific program activities. Examples include Allotment Management Plans, Habitat Management Plans, Recreation Site Development Plans, etc.

AESTHETICS. Dealing with the sense of the beautiful and with judgements concerning beauty.

ALLOTMENT (GRAZING ALLOTMENT). An area of land where one or more individuals graze their livestock. It generally consists of BLM lands but may include parcels of private or state owned lands. The number of livestock and season(s) of use are stipulated for each allotment. An allotment may consist of several pastures or be only one pasture.

ALLOTMENT MANAGEMENT PLAN (AMP). A concisely written program of livestock grazing management, including supportive measures if required, designed to attain specific management goals in a grazing allotment.

ANIMAL UNIT MONTH. A standardized unit of measurement of the amount of forage necessary for the complete sustenance of one animal unit for a period of one month; also a unit of measurement of grazing privileges which represents the privilege of grazing one animal unit for a period of one month.

CULTURAL RESOURCES. A term that includes resources of historical, archaeological, or architectural significance, which are fragile, limited, and nonrenewable portions of the human environment.

DEFERRED ROTATION GRAZING. The discontinuance of livestock grazing on various parts of a range in succeeding years, allowing each part to rest successively during the growing season to permit seed production, establishment of seedlings, or restoration of plant vigor.

ECOLOGY. A study of animals and plants in their relation to each other and to their environment.

ENDANGERED OR THREATENED STATUS. Determined for plants and animals by any one or a combination of the following factors: (1) the present or threatened destruction, modification, or curtailment of its habitat or range; (2) overutilization for commercial, sporting, scientific or educational purposes; (3) disease or predation; (4) the adequacy of existing regulatory mechanisms; or (5) other natural or man-made factors affecting its continued existence.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT RECORD (EAR). A concisely written record of environmental factors in land management actions.

ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT (ES). A written analysis of the impacts of a proposed project (e.g., grazing program) on the environment.

EXCLOSURES. An area protected (usually by fences) against the entrance of unwanted animals.

FEDERAL LAND POLICY AND MANAGEMENT ACT OF 1976 (FLPMA). Public Law 94-579, October 21, 1976, often referred to as the BLM "Organic Act" which provides the majority of BLM's legislated authority, direction, policy and basic management guidance.

FORAGE ALLOCATION. The percent of average annual forage production allocated in the land use decision process to a given activity (i.e., domestic livestock wildlife, water protection and enhancement, wild and free-roaming horses and burros).

IMPACT. Negative or positive effects on social, economic, institutional, environmental and other resource values.

LAND USE DECISIONS. Resource allocations which resolve on-the-ground conflicts generated by attempting to fully implement all activities on the same general area of land. The decision reflects social, economic, environmental, political, and interagency considerations.

LEK. The breeding grounds of prairie grouse species (i.e., sharptail dancing grounds, etc.)

MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK PLAN (MFP). A planning decision document which establishes, for a given planning area, land use allocations, coordination guidelines for multiple use, and management objectives to be achieved for each class of land use or protection. It is the Bureau's land use plan. It is prepared in three steps: Step 1 - Resource Recommendations; Step 2 - Impact Analysis and Alternative Development; and Step 3 - Decision-making.

MULTIPLE USE MANAGEMENT. Coordinated management of the various surface and sub-surface resources, without permanent impairment of the productivity of the land, that will best meet the present and future needs of the people.

NON-DISCRETIONARY. Actions required by federal law, court or Executive Order, i.e., protection of designated, endangered, or threatened plants and animals, protection of designated historical or archaeological sites, etc.

PHENOLOGICAL. Relations between climate and periodic biologic phenomenon such as migrations and breedings of wildlife.

PLANNING UNIT. A geographic unit within a Bureau of Land Management district which includes related lands, resources, and use pressure problems which are considered together for resource inventory and planning.

RAPTORS. A functional group of birds including all birds of prey, such as the eagle, hawk, owl, and vulture.

RESOURCE ALLOCATION. See LAND USE DECISIONS.

RIPARIAN. Situated on or pertaining to the bank of a river, stream or other body of water.

SILVICULTURAL. Theory and practice of controlling the establishment, composition, constitution, and growth of forests.

SUSTAINED YIELD. The achievement and maintenance in perpetuity of a high-level annual or regular periodic output of the various renewable resources of the public lands consistent with multiple use.

VISUAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT CLASSES. Classification of landscapes according to the kinds of artificial structures and modifications which are acceptable to meet established visual goals.

WATERSHED. A basin or region draining into a creek, stream, river, river system, or body of water.

WITHDRAWAL. An action which withdraws described public lands from operation of certain laws which are also described in the withdrawal order.

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